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THE

DOCTRINE

OF

Universal Restoration,

EXAMINED AND REFUTED;

AND THE

OBJECTIONS TO THAT

OF

ENDLESS PUNISHMENT

CONSIDERED AND ANSWERED:

BEING A REPLY

TO THE

MOST IMPORTANT PARTICULARS

CONTAINED IN THE WRITINGS

OF

Messrs. WINCHESTER, VIDLER, WRIGHT, AND WEAVER.

By D. ISAAC.

"IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO RENEW THEM AGAIN UNTO REPENTANCE," HEB. vi. 4, 6.

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PREFACE.

IF the Writer of the following Pages had not believed that the intereſts of Morality are materially involved in this controverſy, he would not have recommended his thoughts upon it to the notice of the public. The immoral tendency of the Reſtoration-Syſtem is ſhewn in the courſe of this work.

One of the moſt important doctrines of Chriſtianity, the doctrine of Atonement, has no place in the Univerſaliſt's creed, if conſiſtency be regarded. It cannot be reconciled with his doctrine of corrective puniſhment. Mr. Weaver obſerves, "Divine juſtice is that perfection in God, by "which he endeavours continually to make all "intelligences juſt."† According to this repreſentation, juſtice does not look backward, and puniſh 'according to the deeds done in the body;' but forward, and diſpoſes of her ſtripes in the way beſt calculated to correct the moral pravity of the mind. In this ſyſtem, therefore, the doctrine of guilt has no place: no man need apply for 'redemption through the blood of Chriſt, the *forgiveneſs* of ſins,' Eph. i. 7, but merely for 'the renewing of the Holy Ghoſt,' Titus iii. 5; ſince the recovery of the mind to virtue is the great point to which the exerciſe of divine juſtice is directed. If the Blood of Atonement be not counted,

† Endleſs Miſery overthrown, p. 9.

counted, upon this ſcheme, an "unholy thing it muſt be conſidered, at leaſt, as an "unneceſſa "thing." The moſt intelligent of the Unive ſaliſts are fully aware of this, and have ther fore, very prudently, taken ſanctuary in Soc nianiſm.

The author has endeavoured to leave the in moral no alternative betwixt converſion and "fearful looking for of judgment and fiery i "dignation." He ſeriouſly wiſhes ſuch to weig well what is advanced, and, perhaps, they wi ſee that even the infinite love and mercy of Gc is not to be called into queſtion, ſhould they, b rejecting the grace offered in the goſpel, rend themſelves eternally wretched. It is hoped th ſuch a view of things may have a happy influenc upon their minds, and lead them to improve th preſent day of their viſitation, ſo as to inſure pr ſent and eternal happineſs. Should this be th caſe in a ſingle inſtance, he will think himſe amply compenſated for the time and labour whic he has devoted to this ſubject. He is, however too well acquainted with the prejudices of man kind, in favour of ſchemes which are not ver rigid in their exactions on the ſcore of morality to expect that many will be reclaimed who hav given their aſſent to the ſyſtem here oppoſed. Hi great aim has been to preſerve the ſerious chri tian from falling into, what he conſiders, *a ver dangerous error.*

The arguments which prove the endleſs dura tion of future puniſhment are here brought for ward ſparingly, as that ſubject is nearly exhauſte by Meſſrs. Taylor, Fuller, and Jerram; whoſ valuable writings merit the moſt ſerious and atten tive peruſal.

There

There is not a claſs of writers who talk more about candour, charity, and liberality, or who diſcover leſs of theſe Chriſtian graces, than the Univerſaliſts. Mr. Weaver, after expreſſing his diſapprobation of Mr. Huntington's aſperity, proceeds to call him, "The ſurgeon,—the butcher,—the raving ſinner."* He is not leſs ceremonious with his other adverſaries. One is called "a ſnarling cynic," and another "a flippant fop." Without preſuming to juſtify Mr H., it is very natural to enquire, whether he has not as much right to deal in hard words as Mr. W.? Will an Univerſaliſt pretend, that other denominations of Chriſtians have not an equal right with himſelf to think freely upon religious ſubjects, and to embrace thoſe ſentiments which appear to them to be moſt conformable to divine truth? If he will not, he ought not to blame them for believing that the Doctrine of Univerſal Reſtoration is an erroneous, and dangerous ſyſtem. It ſeems that the candour and liberality of the Univerſaliſts conſiſts in attaching little or no importance to articles of faith and modes of worſhip. All who come up to this ſtandard, receive the fraternal embrace; but ſuch as think differently, are ſtigmatized as bigots. There is certainly ſuch a thing as being bigoted againſt thoſe who are conſidered as bigots. And are thoſe who indulge this ſpirit more to be commended than the bigots whom they condemn? No, in no wiſe.

Mr. Wright "preſumes," he tells us, "that the Editor of the Theological Magazine is one of thoſe miſtaken good men who rejoice in the ungodlike doctrine of endleſs miſery."† Muſt a man rejoice in every doctrine which he believes to be true?

* Free Thoughts, preface, p. 17. † Examination of Ryland's Sermon, p. 6.

true? Then Mr. Wright rejoices in the doctrine that many millions of his fellow-creatures will b tormented in hell for an age. But Mr. Wrigh calls him one of the *good men!* and then aſcribe to him diſpoſitions, which, for malignity, can onl juſt be equalled by thoſe of devils!

Mr. Vidler too affirms, that "the leading me both among Calviniſts and Arminians, are doin every thing which intereſt, connexion, favour, c frowns can do, to prevent the threatening evil,- to ſtop the progreſs of the Univerſal Doctrine." It muſt be remarked that this charge is altogethe unſupported by evidence. The *leading men*, are ſe lected out of theſe two bodies of Chriſtians for M V. to ſpit his venom at. It is—but language doe not furniſh a name for ſo vile a calumny. Let M V. go and learn what that Scripture meanet "Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs againſt th neighbour."

Mr. Samuel Bradburn is charged with ſayin that "the Univerſaliſts put hell-fire in the plac of the blood of Chriſt." This produced a lette from Mr. V., addreſſed to Mr. S. Bradburn, an all the Methodiſt Preachers in England. As non of them honoured it with their notice, Mr. V makes an oſtentatious triumph in the advertiſemer of his reply to Mr. Fiſher. The contents of M V.'s letter are unknown to the Author of th work. He did not ſo much as know that ſuch letter had been written, till he ſaw Mr. V. ex ulting in victory, and he then underſtood from a Univerſaliſt Bookſeller, that it was out of prin Should Mr. V. publiſh a new edition of his lette he is deſired to take notice of the following pro of Mr. Bradburn's aſſertion: Mr. Winche when ſpeaking on the effects produced by diffe degre

* *Winchester's Dialogues*, Editor's preface, p. 11. 4th ed

s of puniſhment, illuſtrates the ſubject by
g the caſe of a Mr. M., who underwent
re flogging when he ſerved in the army.
en he firſt began to feel the laſh," ſays Mr.
he was exceedingly enraged. But before
had received half his puniſhment he ſaw
irly that they had acted right. He was en-
ly cured of all his rage, from which he was
much freed by his puniſhment, as ever an
ct was produced by a cauſe. This I think
n argument *ad hominem*; and I think it muſt
admitted that although a certain degree of
iſhment will enflame, harden, and enrage,
farther degrees produce quite contrary ef-
s."* If men are as fully cured of their bad
rs by puniſhment, *as ever an effect was pro-
y a cauſe*, it may be demanded, in the name
nmon ſenſe, how the Blood of Chriſt can be
ned in the cure?

The following work much is ſaid about the
y of Moral Agents. It is not pretended,
er, that men are free by nature to chooſe
ince this power was loſt by the fall.
ſtoration is aſcribed to the grace of God
ſh Jeſus Chriſt, and hence the whole glory
n's redemption is as fully ſecured to the
e Redeemer by the advocates for Moral
y, as it can be by the abettors of the Doc-
of Neceſſity.† It

ilogues, p. 163—164. 4th edition.

When a man loſes a limb or an eye, or is wounded in
mortal part, he cannot have that limb reſtored, or be
ered but by a miracle; and the ſame will hold as to the
ual functions; when they are loſt or diſabled, only he that
them can reſtore them. Now this the Holy Scriptures
the Catholic Church have taught us to be the caſe of the
of man in its corrupted ſtate as to ſpiritual objects, and
fore the effectual interpoſition of God's power to reſtore
" man.

It may not be amiſs to remark here a late diſtinction between *Salvation* and *Reſtoration*. Mr. Wright conſiders this as a matter of "no ſmall importance," and charges Dr. Ryland with "unfairneſs," and with "changing the terms of the queſtion," for not attending to it.* According to this diſtinction, *the ſaved* are preſerved from going down into the pit, and *the reſtored* are delivered out of it. Mr. W. demands,—"Why are the advocates for Univerſal Reſtoration charged with maintaining Univerſal Salvation?" The anſwer is—becauſe they *do* maintain it in their writings. See Wincheſter's Dialogues, preface, p. 7.—"UNIVERSAL SALVATION," ſays he, "is an antidote to all theſe evils," &c. If they chooſe to give it up, they muſt give up, alſo, all thoſe texts which relate to the *ſalvation* of ſinners, ſuch as 1 Tim. ii. 3, 4.—iv. 10., as affording no aid to their cauſe; and then the controverſy will be brought within a much narrower compaſs.†

It may be neceſſary for the reader to know how ſtrong his faith muſt be in order to believe the doctrine of the Reſtoration. Mr. Wincheſter, in his

"man, is the Chriſtian doctrine. But though the reſtoring the "faculty to its former ſtate, be the immediate work of God's "Spirit, yet the acts performed by that reſtored faculty are "man's, and he is free in the exerting of them." King's Origin of Evil, Law's Note, p 408—409. 2d edition.

* Examination, p. 28.

† Mr. Wincheſter, in his Dialogues, p 101, renders 1 Tim. ii. 3, 4, thus: "God our *Reſtorer*, who will have all men to be *reſtored*." Now ſince the apoſtle uſes the plural pronoun of the firſt perſon in this paſſage, (ημων, our, or of us,) if we interpret it according to Mr. Wright's diſtinction, we muſt ſuppoſe that both Paul and Timothy would be adjudged to hell for a time: and if all men are to be reſtored, (and the Univerſaliſts will admit of no conditions here, nor of a reſtricted ſenſe of the word,) then *all men* muſt be ſent to hell: for none are ſaid to be reſtored, according to their phraſeology, but thoſe who have endured future puniſhment.

his ſermon on Philip. iii. 20, obſerves, " It re-
" quires a vaſtly ſtronger faith to believe this im-
" portant truth firmly upon the divine authority,
" than any one in the Bible; and therefore I do
" not wonder that many good people who have faith
" enough to truſt their ſouls in the hands of Jeſus,
" and to believe that he will fulfil all his promiſes
" in their behalf, both as to ſoul and body, for
" this life and that which is to come, have not
" enough to enable them to believe *the final reſtora-*
" *tion of all things.*

" The faith that was neceſſary for Abraham,
" in order to believe that he ſhould have a ſon in
" his old age, and ſhould be the father of a mul-
" titude of nations, was not to be compared to
" the faith neceſſary to believe that our Lord is
" able, and that he will finally ſubdue, rehead in
" himſelf, reconcile, and reſtore all things.

" If GOD was to inform me by his word that
" he would create a thouſand worlds more than
" he has, turn all the animals into rational crea-
" tures, change ſtones into living intelligences,
" and perform ten thouſand more ſuch wonders
" in creation; it would not be half ſo dif-
" ficult for me to believe, as the doctrine of
" the Reſtoration."

Who could have more effectually burleſqued the doctrine of the Reſtoration! The father of the faithful had no faith when compared with that of Wincheſter and his followers! If none can believe the Reſtoration but thoſe who have this *vaſtly ſtronger* faith than is neceſſary to their own ſalvation, the author is under no apprehenſion on account of his readers.

THE

THE DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSAL RESTORATION EXAMINED, &c.

SECTION I.

On the PERFECTIONS *of* GOD.

THE Univerſaliſts pretend to prove from the divine Perfections, as well as from Divine Revelation, that the Reſtoration which they contend for, muſt take place; and that puniſhment cannot be eternal. The following obſervations go to prove that we cannot arrive at any certain concluſion upon this intereſting ſubject, merely from reaſoning on the perfections of God; ſince thoſe perfections do not furniſh us with data, from which we may calculate with preciſion, the future condition of impenitent ſinners.

It may be ſuppoſed that ſome virtuous people have not ſo large a ſhare of happineſs as of miſery in this life, and hence it may ſeem reaſonable that the Almighty ſhould make up the deficiency in the life to come. But this does not apply to the caſe of the wicked. Abraham reaſoned well in Gen. xviii. 25. Suppoſe then God were to annihilate the whole of the human race; the wicked at death, or after a period of ſuffering, and the righteous when their ſum of happineſs is equal to, or in ſome degree exceeds their ſum of miſery, what injury would His perfections ſuſtain by this? Would He not be the ſame

juſt,

juſt, and holy, and good Being, when man ſhould be no more, that He was before man exiſted? Is He any more obliged to give us exiſtence to eternity, than He was to give us exiſtence from eternity? And what obligation is He under to renew His mercies to thoſe in another world who only abuſe them in this? It is ſo far, then, from being certain from the Perfections of God that the wicked will be reſtored and put in poſſeſſion of eternal happineſs, that it cannot be proved from theſe perfections that they will ſurvive the preſent ſtate of exiſtence, or that even the righteous will live for ever. But tho' it cannot be proved by unaſſiſted reaſon, that immortality belongs to man, we muſt not forget that this is brought to light by the goſpel.

If ſin be puniſhed at all, the puniſhment muſt be in proportion to the magnitude of the offence: it is therefore impoſſible to conclude any thing about the duration of puniſhment, till we have aſcertained the exceeding ſinfulneſs of ſin, which certainly cannot be aſcertained by the light of nature. Our reaſonings on the Divine perfections would not have led us to conclude that the ground is curſed on account of ſin: we could not have perceived ſo cloſe a connection between the moral and natural world, as to perceive that a diſorder in the one would ſo materially affect the other. Much leſs could we have ſeen that the ſin of man is the cauſe of the miſery of the brute creation. For who can perceive any neceſſary connection between the ſin of a man, and the ſuffering of a beaſt? Yet our ſenſes convince us that the earth is under a curſe, and that the whole animal creation *groaneth and travaileth together in pain*; and Revelation informs us of the cauſe. Had we other ſenſes, we might perhaps trace the effects of ſin much farther. It is allowed that the government of God is infinite, and that ſome connection runs thro the whole; and it is no more improbable that the whole univerſe might, in ſome way or other, be affected

affected by the ſin of man, than that it ſhould contaminate our elements, and make the world groan with the miſeries of its inhabitants. It muſt be obſerved too, that the laws of God have infinite authority ſtamped upon them, and that God has laid us under infinite obligations to obey them. When we put all theſe things together;—when we conſider that ſin may perhaps be infinite in its effects, that it is committed againſt an infinite Being, and that it is a violation of infinite obligations, it will be difficult, if not impoſſible to prove, that ſin is not an infinite evil: and if it be an infinite evil, it muſt merit infinite or eternal puniſhment.

As lame an argument as Mr. Wincheſter affects to call this, he has made but a very lame reply to it.

1. "If ſin be infinite, then we muſt aſcribe to it one of the Perfections of the Deity, which ſtrikes me as abſurd." * Is it abſurd to ſay that ſpace is infinite? Is it abſurd to ſay ſome creatures will exiſt through infinite duration? Muſt infinity be aſcribed to nothing but God?

2. "Actions muſt take their denomination from the actors, and not from the objects." † In eſtimating the magnitude of ſin, the objects and the effects of it muſt be taken into the account, as well as the actors. It is certainly a much greater ſin in a man to murder a friend who has a large family, and who has loaded him with favours, than to murder a perſon who ſtands in no ſuch relation to him, and who has no family connections, though the murderous diſpoſition may poſſibly be the ſame in both caſes. We muſt conſider the *objects*: the common ſenſe of mankind agrees that it is much more criminal to kill a friend, who has laid the murderer under great obligations, than to kill an indifferent perſon. We muſt conſider the *effects*: if an unconnected perſon be ſlain,

* Dialogues on the Reſtoration, p. 185. † Ibid.

ſlain, the evil goes no further; but if the head of a family be taken away by the dagger of the aſſaſſin, his widow and children, who were dependent upon him for ſupport, are reduced to beggary and want: and will any man ſay this is no aggravation of the crime?

3. "Infinite actions, or actions of infinite magnitude, require infinite power to perform them."* Mr. Wincheſter allows that God will reward the righteous actions of his people with glory infinite in duration. Their righteous actions then are *infinite in their effects*, though not performed by infinite power.

4. "All ſins are offences againſt God, and if every offence againſt God is of infinite magnitude, how can any be greater? And thus all diſtinction between leſſer and greater ſins is entirely deſtroyed, and all ſins will be eſteemed equal, contrary to the whole tenor of the Scriptures."† Mr. W. talks in this random way by ſuppoſing that ſin takes its denomination from the actors only, and not from the objects: but I have ſhewn this to be a miſtake. Suppoſe ſin againſt God to merit endleſs puniſhment, yet the *degree* of that puniſhment may be in proportion to the depravity of the actor; ſo that the diſtinction between leſſer and greater ſins is as fully preſerved upon our ſcheme, as upon that of our opponents.‡

It

* Dialogues, p. 185. † Ibid. p. 187.

‡ It is rather ſingular that Mr. W. ſhould be ſo zealous for the diſtinction between leſſer and greater ſins; when, in the very next page, he has deſtroyed all juſt proportion between ſin and puniſhment. For he obſerves upon Jer. xvi 18, and Iſa. xl. 1, 2, "Here a fact is ſaid to be accompliſhed, which upon your "ſcheme can never be done to all eternity for if every offence "againſt God is of infinite magnitude, and deſerves infinite "puniſhment, none can ever have received *ſingle* for *one of* "their *ſins*, far leſs DOUBLE for ALL." Mr. W. here ſuppoſes they received double the puniſhment which their ſins *deſerved*. But if God may give ſinners as much more puniſhment as they deſerve,

It is a fundamental principle of the Doctrine of the Reſtoration, that puniſhment is corrective in its nature; but this cannot be inferred from the Perfections of God. According to the regular operation of the laws of nature, ſome ſins deprive men of the uſe of reaſon; the puniſhment in caſes of this ſort cannot be corrective, becauſe the ſubjects of it are utterly incapable of moral improvement. Other ſins prove deſtructive to the animal economy; and reaſon cannot perceive how the puniſhment of death is a correction. And if God has not connected correction with puniſhment in this world, how can we be certain he will do it in the next? Muſt he alter his laws to our advantage as often as we chooſe to break them? Would not our reaſonings on his attributes have led us to the concluſion, that preſent ſufferings, as well as future, muſt be corrective, had not ſenſe been on the other ſide of the queſtion? It appears probable from Reaſon, and certain from Revelation, that God, in connecting miſery with ſin, deſigned miſery to operate as a *warning*; thereby to prevent the commiſſion of ſin: but there is a vaſt difference between puniſhment being a warning to others, and corrective to individual ſufferers. The ends of puniſhment muſt be aſcertained, before we can conclude any thing poſitively about its duration. I have ſhewn that correction is not immediately connected with puniſhment in the preſent conſtitution of nature, and therefore that connection is not neceſſary to the diſplay of the Divine Perfections. No other end of puniſhment leads to any favourable concluſion reſpecting the Doctrine of Reſtoration. It cannot be denied that God intended miſery to operate

deſerve, he may give them a thouſand times more than they deſerve:—here is an end of Divine Juſtice. And what have ſinners to fear from hell, ſuppoſe they only receive *ſingle* for their ſins, if the 70 years captivity of the Jews was *double* the puniſhment which their ſins merited? I believe the words mean, 'God had 'given them *double the* puniſhment, on that occaſion, that he 'had given for any former apoſtacy.'

operate as a warning, unleſs we will oppoſe Reaſon to Revelation; and ſince warnings may be uſeful for ever, to ſome or other of God's creatures, we cannot be ſure that puniſhment will not be eternal.

The ſtrength of ſinful habits is a queſtion of conſiderable importance in this controverſy. It cannot be proved from the Perfections of God, that ſinful habits may not become unconquerable. If it be ſaid that, by an omnipotent act, God may recover the very worſt; the anſwer is, that if it were proper for God to operate in an irreſiſtible manner againſt ſin, he would have either prevented its exiſtence, or cruſhed it at its birth. This concluſion may be denied by thoſe who hold that the grace of God works irreſiſtibly in ſome, and not at all in others; but it cannot be denied by the Univerſaliſts, becauſe they do not believe in the partiality of the Divine Goodneſs in relation to his creatures. We ſee then that the conſtitution of the Divine government is againſt this omnipotent act, and we cannot pretend to prove from the Divine Attributes, that God muſt alter his laws in favour of the moſt undeſerving of his creatures. On the other hand, facts teſtify that ſome effectually defeat his gracious deſigns concerning them in this world; they die hardened in ſin; and if God does not new-model his government in their favour in the other world, there can be no hope of their converſion and reſtoration.

In reaſoning on the Divine Perfections, we are liable to contradict acknowledged facts. Thus Meſſ. Vidler and Wright argue from the *goodneſs*, *wiſdom*, and *power* of God, as though man did not poſſeſs moral liberty, and as though ſin did not, and could not exiſt, as will be ſeen at large in the following ſections. And if the reader will only be at the trouble to apply all the arguments which they draw from the Perfections of God to theſe two facts, he will

will find, in general, that they are as conclufive againſt one, or both of them, as againſt the endleſs duration of future puniſhment.

The Univerſaliſts, in common with their opponents, appeal to Revelation; they profeſs to reſpect its authority; they ought therefore to be ſatisfied with its deciſion. We may be miſtaken in our reaſonings and conjectures, but what God has ſaid muſt be true. If the Divine Word be in their favour, I will not pretend to oppoſe to it the Divine Attributes; and ſhould it appear that God has pronounced puniſhment to be eternal, I think I have already proved, beyond a doubt, that his Attributes do not contradict it. *To the law* then, *and to the teſtimony.*

Section II.

On the Wisdom, Power, *and* Goodness *of* GOD.

"As God is the firſt cauſe of all," ſays Mr. Vidler, "it is conſiſtent with reaſon that he ſhould "ſeek the happineſs of all his creatures;—and that "whatever the goodneſs of God hath willed, and "his wiſdom planned, that his power will execute."

Mr. Fiſher, in reply, obſerved, "If God, as "you affirm, ſhould ſeek the happineſs of all his "creatures, and his power will accompliſh what his "wiſdom planned, and his goodneſs willed; we aſk "how it came to paſs that there ſhould be ſo much "evil and miſery in the world as there confeſſedly "is? And if it have not yet been the caſe, that "the power of God hath co-operated with his will "effectually to prevent the entrance of ſin and its "conſequent evils into the world, how doth it

"appear from a conſideration of the Divine Attri-
" butes only, as they have been already exerciſed in
" the government of the world, that his power will
" *finally* accompliſh what his goodneſs wills reſpect-
" ing the happineſs of all his creatures? Why not
" then prevent them from being miſerable at all?
" As God is infinitely good and infinitely powerful,
" he muſt be too good to will the exiſtence of ſin,
" and too powerful not to be able to prevent it."

This was a blow at the root, and Mr. V. felt its force. "If I underſtand this paragraph aright," ſays he, "it implies, either

"1. That my premiſes are wrong, and God is not
" infinitely wiſe, powerful, and good, but that he
" is either weak, fooliſh, or wicked, or all of
" it, or,

"2. Though he be infinitely wiſe, powerful,
" and good, that he has willed bad things, plan-
" ned fooliſh things, and executed them; or,

"3. That he has willed good things, planned
" wiſe things, but is diſappointed in the execution of
" them; or,

"4. Though the Divine character be infinitely
" wiſe, powerful, and good, and that whatever his
" goodneſs willed and his wiſdom planned, his power
" will execute; yet that we know nothing about it,
" but are left in total ignorance of it.

"But if neither of theſe can be granted, then
" my inference from the Divine Perfections remains
" in full force." *

What pitiful ſhuffling is this! Mr. V. does not deny that his argument is as concluſive againſt the introduction of ſin and miſery as againſt their endleſs continuance; and yet he will not give it up!

There

* God's Love to his Creatures, p. 12—15.

There is ſuch a ſtriking reſemblance between this argument, and that urged by Epicurus againſt Divine Providence, that a perſon may be almoſt tempted to think the one was borrowed from the other. "Either "God is willing," ſays this Philoſopher, "to re- "move evils, and not able, or able and not willing, "or neither able nor willing. If he be willing and "not able, he is impotent, which cannot be applied "to the Deity: If he be able and not willing, he "is envious, which is equally inconſiſtent with the "nature of God. If he be neither willing nor able, "he is both envious and impotent, and conſequently "no God. If he be both willing and able, which "is the only thing that anſwers to the notion of a "God, from whence come evils? or why does he "not remove them."*

If Mr. V.'s reaſoning be juſt, it is eaſy to ſee that Epicurus's inference is the moſt natural. For if God in his goodneſs, ſeeks the happineſs of all his creatures, if his wiſdom diſcerns the way in which they may be made happy, and if his power muſt execute the plan deviſed by his wiſdom, then it muſt *neceſſarily* follow, that evil muſt immediately ceaſe, or rather, never could have exiſted: but this is contrary to matter of fact; we muſt therefore infer that there is no Providence. Mr. V., as a chriſtian miniſter, cannot admit this concluſion; he muſt therefore abandon the ground on which it is built.

But I need not try to *cut* this knot; I can *untie* it very readily with the aid of the doctrine of *Moral Liberty*. On this principle I can deny his inference without admitting any one of his implications. In all the Divine diſpenſations in relation to man, God has an eye to his Free Agency, and will not deſtroy it. Miſery entered with the abuſe of Liberty; and the *poſſibility* of the abuſe of it being continued, militates

* King's Origin of Evil, p. 486.

militates against the *certainty* of the Reſtoration in queſtion; for to ſay that a man endowed with *Liberty* to ſin, muſt *neceſſarily* be virtuous, is a contradiction in terms. I ſay then in reply both to Epicurus and Mr. V., that the introduction of miſery, and its endleſs continuance, are owing to an abuſe of Moral Liberty in man, and not to any deficiency in the wiſdom, or power, or goodneſs of God.

If Mr. V. ſhould deny the doctrine of Moral Liberty, his difficulties will be increaſed rather than diminiſhed. For if God has made men *neceſſary* agents, he is the author of evil. There can be no more propriety in charging it upon them, on this ſuppoſition, than there would be in charging my pen, rather than myſelf, with the errors contained in this book. Mr. V. would, therefore, have to inform us, how infinite Holineſs could be the author of ſin, and infinite Happineſs the author of miſery.

Mr. Wright confidently aſſerts that "what is ſaid "about *free-will* by no means involves the Reſtitu- "tion in uncertainty; for though God will ever "treat his creatures as free, intelligent beings, yet "they will never become independent of him, or of "his government; nor will he ſuffer his counſel to "be overturned, and his deſigns to be defeated by "the machinations of the enemy."*

It is true that ſinners will never become independent of the government of God; but it is as true that they are *now* dependent, and that they are *now* miſerable; and if preſent dependence does not provide againſt preſent miſery, then neither does eternal dependence againſt eternal miſery. But "he will not "ſuffer his counſel to be overturned, nor his deſigns "to be defeated." I wiſh to know whether God has any counſels or deſigns reſpecting the happineſs of his intelligent creatures which are not connected with virtue?

* *Examination* of Dr. Ryland's Sermon, p. 40.

virtue? Can they be made happy without being previouſly made holy? Mr. W. will ſay, No. It will follow then that if God's counſels and deſigns reſpecting their happineſs cannot be defeated, his counſels and deſigns reſpecting their holineſs cannot be defeated. Now to come to matter of fact,—God deſigns that men ſhould be virtuous in this life; but thouſands defeat thoſe deſigns by obſtinate perſeverance in iniquity. The inference is, that God's counſels and deſigns reſpecting their happineſs are defeated: and if this may be the caſe for an age, it may for ever.

Section III.

On the Justice *of* GOD.

"DIVINE Juſtice," ſays Mr. Weaver, "is that "perfection in God, by which he endea-"vours continually to make all intelligences juſt."* If God *endeavours continually* to make all ſinful creatures juſt, it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe that there muſt, by this time, be ſome notable change, for the better, wrought in Satan and his angels; but the experience of the ſaints fully contradict it: perhaps thoſe *endeavours* are very feeble.

Mr. Wright ſays, "With reſpect to Satan and his "angels, they have never experienced their proper "puniſhment; but are reſerved under chains of "darkneſs unto the judgment of the great day; of "courſe we ought not to be at all ſurpriſed that "their puniſhment has not had its effect before they "are fully ſubjected to it."†

It

* Endleſs Miſery overthrown, p. 9.

† Examination of Ryland's Sermon, p. 48, 49.

It is granted they do not experience that feverity of punifhment which is referved for them; but it is certain their mifery is great. According to the conftitution of nature, there is no peace to the wicked; they are like the troubled fea; the diforder of their minds muft render them wretched; and, in addition to this, they are repreſented as being confined in chains of darkneſs unto the judgment of the great day. If Mr. W. were confined in a dark dungeon, laden with irons, oppreſſed with guilty fears, tormented with unholy paſſions and appetites, and looking forward to the aſſizes under the aſſurance of being then puniſhed in the moſt ſevere and exemplary manner, I dare ſay he would feel himſelf to be extremely miſerable. And if the fallen angels may be very wretched for thouſands of years without being in the leaſt reformed, I think we are warranted in ſaying, that God does not *endeavour continually* to make them juſt by their ſufferings; or elſe, that he endeavours to do it in vain: either of which is inconſiſtent with the doctrine of their reſtoration.*

Mr. Wright "offers ſome remarks upon the nature "of divine juſtice. I do not," ſays he, "conceive "the juſtice of God to conſiſt in inexorable ſeverity "of conduct, in his taking all poſſible advantages "of the errors and follies of mortals."† And pray ſir, who have ſuch conceptions? What neceſſity was there for this *remark?* But wherein does it conſiſt?

* It is rather ſurpriſing that the Univerſaliſts have not adopted Dr. Prieſtley's ſentiment, to get rid of this difficulty. The Doctor roundly aſſerts, "That there is ſuch a perſon as "*the Devil*, is no part of my faith, nor that of many other "chriſtians; nor am I ſure that it was the belief of any of the "chriſtian writers. Neither do I believe the doctrine of dæmoniacal poſſeſſions, *whether it was believed by the ſacred writers "or not;* and yet my unbelief in theſe articles does not affect my "faith in the great facts of which the Evangeliſts were eye and "ear witneſſes. *They might not be competent judges in the one "caſe*, though perfectly ſo with reſpect to the other." Moſes and the Hindoos compared, p. 341.

† *Examination* of Ryland's Sermon, p. 34.

conſiſt? "In the undeviating rectitude of his nature "and conduct, in his rendering to every creature "that which is moſt conſiſtent with his own perfec- "tions, in his doing, in every caſe, that which is "moſt right to be done by infinite wiſdom, power, "and goodneſs, for the preſervation of eternal order "throughout the univerſe." *. I ſhall ſhew preſently that this definition and endleſs puniſhment are perfectly reconcilable; in the mean time I will proceed to another of Mr. W.'s remarks. "I remark that "Dr. Ryland's concluſion, *If the reſtitution take "place on the foundation of grace, and through the "mediation of Chriſt, then the juſtice of eternal "puniſhment is admitted*, evidently implies that grace "cannot operate without arreſting the arm of juſtice, "and that what Chriſt effects, through his media- "tion, ſtops the courſe of juſtice." † The doctor's concluſion implies that there may be juſtice without grace, but not that there cannot be grace without injuſtice; the proof, therefore, "that God, in diſ- "penſing his favours, acts with the ſtricteſt juſtice," was unneceſſary.

Mr. W. goes on, "I think Dr. R.'s miſtake ariſes "from his ſuppoſing that the juſtice of God conſiſts "in his giving to every one of thoſe who die in their "ſins, according to the ſtrict demerit of their con- "duct; this is not to be concluded from the decla- "ration, *who will render to every one according to "their deeds*." ‡ If it cannot be concluded from this text, it may from the following: Matt. v. 26.—xviii. 23, 35. Luke xii. 10, 58, 59. Heb. x. 26—29. James ii. 13. If ſinners may be caſt into the priſon of hell, in the Almighty's debt, to remain there till they pay *all* that is due unto him, to th *uttermoſt farthing* and the *very laſt mite*, altho' they *have not* to pay with; if they may ſo blaſpheme the Holy Ghoſt, that they *ſhall not be forgiven*; if they may

* Examination, p. 34. † Ibid. p. 35. ‡ Ibid. p. 37.

may commit sin of such magnitude that the sacrifice of Christ remains *no more* for them, and that their *certain* portion will be fiery indignation; and if they will have *judgment without mercy*; then I think it is sufficiently evident, that they will receive according to the strict demerit of their crimes, and that the demerit thereof is eternal damnation.

But "if Divine Justice required that sinners should "receive according to their demerits, it could not "be an act of justice to pardon the guilty. It can- "not well be denied, either, that divine justice does "not require the endless punishment of sinners, or "that God will, in divers instances, fail to do what "his justice requires."* This is such childish quib- bling, that one would wonder a man of sense should have recourse to it. Mr. W. knows that *believers only* are pardoned; he ought therefore to have stated it thus: "If Divine Justice required that those who *die in unbelief* should receive according to their demerits, it could not be an act of justice to pardon those who are *obedient to the faith.*" Now who does not perceive the futility of this reasoning? According to Mr. W.'s logic, it is easy to see that he himself is under a *mistake* if he suppose that Divine Justice requires *any* future punishment. For, "if Divine Justice required that sinners should receive any future punishment, it could not be an act of justice to pardon the guilty in this life. It cannot well be denied, either, that Divine Justice does not require any future punishment, or that God will, in divers instances, fail to do what his justice requires." How well qualified is Mr. W. to point out the mis- takes of others! I believe neither he, nor any other man will undertake to prove, that it would be *unjust* in God to punish those who die in sin according to the strict demerit of their conduct.

"I will

* Examination, p. 87, 88.

"I will enquire," says Mr. W., "*if we have any proof that eternal punishment would be just?* If it would be just, I know of but three ways in which the justice of it can be discoverable by us:

"1. From its being perceivable, by reason, that the demerit of sin is unbounded; and, consequently, that it is reasonable to conclude, that the sinner ought, in justice, to be punished with inexpressible torments to all eternity; but to assert this, would be to contradict the most evident facts, the clearest perceptions of the human mind, that man is a creature whose powers are limited, consequently, whose virtues and vices must be limited; —that there are degrees in sin, and ought, in justice, to be degrees in punishment. The reason which God hath given us must revolt at the idea of the crimes of a few years, perhaps of a few days, being punished with the most exquisite misery, so long as God himself exists. Such a doctrine outrages all our feelings."*

I will not undertake to prove merely by unassisted reason that punishment *must* be eternal, since the question involves in it the consideration of a variety of subjects too deep for the most penetrating human mind to develope, without the aid of Divine Revelation: it will be quite sufficient to shew that punishment *may* be eternal. But, it seems, "the most evident facts, and the clearest perceptions of the human mind" are against its possibility. We may enquire however, what those facts and perceptions are? Why, one is, "The powers of man are limited." Very well; and what then? "Consequently his virtues and vices must be limited." This is not so clear a perception as the former. A man may injure his body to such a degree, by cutting off an arm or plucking out an eye, that nothing in the material

* Examination, p. 31, 32.

material world can make it perfect again; and ſince Mr. W. will allow that the ſoul may be injured, he cannot be ſure that the injury may not be ſo great, in ſome caſes, that nothing in the ſpiritual world can reſtore it to its former ſtate. So that if man's powers be limited, yet the effects of his vices may be infinite. As to man's virtues, I think even the Univerſaliſts will allow that they are not limited *in their effects*. It will not be pretended to be contrary either to Reaſon or Revelation, that a man who has lived virtuouſly in this world ſhould be happy for ever hereafter; and Mr. W., I dare ſay, thinks it is not contrary to reaſon, that the *reſtored* ſhould have a degree of bliſs inferior to that of the *ſaved*.* It cannot therefore be denied that the virtues performed by our limited powers in this life, are the cauſe of our enjoying a degree of happineſs for ever, which, without thoſe virtues, we ſhould be deprived of. And if the effects of virtue may be happineſs infinite in duration, then, for any thing which our reaſon can percieve to the contrary, the effects of vice may be miſery infinite in duration alſo.

But, "there are degrees in ſin, and ought, in "juſtice, to be degrees in puniſhment. Reaſon "revolts at the idea of the crimes of a few years, "perhaps of a few days, being puniſhed for ever." Mr. W. here pleads for two rules of proportion, firſt, between the *degrees* of ſin and the *degrees* of puniſhment; ſecond, between the *time* of ſinning, and the *time* of ſuffering. To the firſt I have no objection; for it is as eaſy to ſuppoſe the degree of puniſhment in hell to be proportioned to the degree of moral pravity in ſinners, though the duration of puniſhment be endleſs, as it is to ſuppoſe the degree of glory in heaven to be proportioned to the degree of moral virtue in the ſaints, whoſe happineſs, Mr. W. believes will be eternal. Now before I proceed to the

* Examination, p. 44.

the other rule, I wiſh to aſk Mr. W. whether a ſinner will receive twenty degrees of puniſhment for ten degrees of ſin? I know Mr. W. will revolt at ſuch an idea: he will plead for an *equal* proportion, ten degrees of puniſhment for ten degrees of ſin. I beg leave then to remind him, that reaſon requires his ſecond rule ſhould be calculated in an *equal* proportion alſo; thus, for ten years of ſin, a man ought to receive ten years of puniſhment. I know Mr. W. will not plead for an equal proportion being applied to his ſecond rule; but I know alſo, that any reaſon which he can aſſign for a different proportion will ſerve to overturn the rule. Should he ſay that a longer ſeaſon of ſuffering is neceſſary to reſtrain ſin, by operating as a warning to others; I then anſwer, that the duration of ſuffering is not proportioned to the *time* of ſinning, but to the *reſtraint* neceſſary to be laid upon ſinners; and ſince Mr. W. cannot ſhew that the threatening of everlaſting puniſhment is more than a neceſſary warning, he cannot ſhew that juſtice does not require endleſs miſery. If he ſay, that a longer term of ſuffering is neceſſary to correct the moral pravity of ſinners; then I reply again, that the duration of puniſhment is not proportioned to the *time* of ſinning, but to the *ſtrength* of ſin; and as we have ſeen above, that the wound which ſin gives to the ſoul may be incurable, it follows, that puniſhment may be eternal.

Once more, "Such a doctrine outrages all our feelings." True; but that is no new thing. Criminals are often outrageous under their ſufferings, tho' according to the reaſon of ſober men, they are not too ſevere. The damned are outrageous enough, God knows! They are repreſented as gnaſhing their teeth with rage. But if our feelings are to ſettle the controverſy, why does Mr. W. appeal to our reaſon?

My

My reaſon leads me to the following reflections upon the ſubject. Suppoſe a man to live in ſin for "threeſcore years and ten," and then to go into another world. Since he continually abuſed his mercies in this world, 'tis juſt that they ſhould be diminiſhed, if not withheld in the next. Among the chief of our mercies we place our religious advantages: Juſtice would therefore require a diminution of theſe. But if he went into the other world more ſinful than he came into this, and if he there enjoyed fewer helps to virtue than when here, it is not only poſſible, but extremely probable, if not morally certain, that he would grow worſe and worſe. But his mercies might juſtly be diminiſhed in proportion to his abuſe of them. He might therefore ſin them all away, and ſo be for ever unholy: and ſince we perceive that, by the conſtitution of nature, ſin and miſery are inſeparably connected together, he muſt, in ſuch a caſe, be eternally miſerable.

"2. If the juſtice of eternal puniſhment be diſcoverable by us, it muſt be by our perceiving that "ſome principle exiſts in the Deity, which will render conſiſtent with his character, the infliction of "infinite puniſhment upon his offending creatures, "for finite offences. But from what part of his "works, or of his word, can we perceive that ſuch "a principle exiſts in God? To impute infinite vindictiveneſs and implacability to the *Father of mercies, who is good to all, and whoſe tender mercies "are over all his works*, and who will ever be what "he is, ſeeing he is incapable of changing, would "be to ſuppoſe him transformed into the vereſt monſter in the univerſe."*

If God cannot puniſh ſinners for ever without being *infinitely* vindictive and implacable, then he cannot puniſh them for an age, without being for that

* Examination, p. 32.

ndictive and implacable; but if God be
le of changing, and will ever be what he
muſt either puniſh ſin for ever, or not

proceeds, " To affert that it will com-
h that juſtice which emanates from him
love, for him to be infinitely revengeful;
his vindictive fury with the inexpreſſible
of his rational offspring ſo long as himſelf
that infinite wiſdom will pleaſe itſelf with
a fly upon the wheel to all eternity,
e to belie every thing which God hath
ciouſly pleaſed to reveal concerning him-
to utter the groſſeſt poſſible libel upon
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ery ſafely infer, that ſinners ought not to
d either in this world, or in that which is.
It is rather remarkable that Mr. W. has
and *depravity* out of ſight in this para-
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alm argument.

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for

nation, p. 32, 33.

for the preſervation of eternal order throughout univerſe." And again, p. 35, " juſtice is the r tude of infinite wiſdom and goodneſs." Now I not without hope that I can reconcile infinite pu ment with this repreſentation. Mr. W. muſt re lect that the goodneſs of God is the goodneſs *Sovereign*, and that the Almighty, as well as e good legiſlator, in framing laws for the governr of his ſubjects, has an eye to their good, confid as a body politic.* To give energy to thoſe they muſt have ſanctions annexed to them. penal ſanctions operate as warnings. See Rom. 20, 21. 1 Cor. x. 5—11. Jude 5—7. T they tend to preſerve order, and thereby to pro the general good. And ſince the influence of threatenings will be in proportion to their magnit it muſt be perfectly conſiſtent with the goodnes God, to lay as great a reſtraint upon ſin as poſſi conſiſtent with moral liberty; and if the pro of everlaſting happineſs be not inconſiſtent it, then neither is the threatening of everla miſery.†

* " Juſtice can be no otherwiſe conſidered than as " neſs toward moral agents; regulated in its exerciſe by " dom; or, as wiſely, and in the moſt proper manner p " ing, not the private and ſeparate, but the united good " intelligent beings." Abernethy on the Attributes, 2. p. 183.

That celebrated infidel, Lord Shafteſbury, could per this truth. " If," ſays he, " there be a general min " can have no particular intereſt: But the general goo " good of the whole, and its own private good, mu " neceſſity, be one and the ſame. It can intend nothin " ſides, nor aim at any thing beyond, nor be provoked t " thing contrary." Characteriſticks, Vol. 1. p. 40.

† Archbiſhop King has a fine remark upon this ſub " Since God," ſays he, " has undertaken to conduct and " ſerve an almoſt infinite multitude of thinking being " all eternity, through all the changes and ſucceſſion " things, in as great a degree of happineſs as poſſible, v

It is generally agreed that the good of the public requires that ſome particular tranſgreſſors ſhould be cut off for ever from civil ſociety. And if this be no argument againſt the goodneſs of human legiſlators, why ſhould it be thought inconſiſtent with the goodneſs of Divine Juſtice that ſome individual ſinners ſhould be cut off, for ever, from the ſociety of heaven.*

It will perhaps be objected, that though human legiſlators cannot, in all caſes, deviſe modes of puniſhment which may at the ſame time, be warnings to ſociety, and corrective to the ſufferers, yet it cannot be impoſſible with God to do it. I anſwer, that our buſineſs is not ſo much with what God *can* do, as what he *hath done*, and *will do*. Now the ſacred Scriptures are deciſive upon this ſubject. We do not perceive how the deſtruction of the old world, of the inhabitants of Sodom, &c. could be effected with a view to their reformation: we might as well ſuppoſe that a man is gibbetted to make him an uſeful member of ſociety. When wicked profeſſors are threatened with "ſtrong deluſion," (2 Theſſ. ii. 11, 12.) it is not with a view to their reformation, but their damnation

"out violence done to elections; where is the wonder if he "leave a few to the miſery which they brought upon themſelves, thereby to give the reſt a warning how much they ought "to ſtand upon their guard againſt the like? And ſince theſe "puniſhments may be conceived to promote the good of "the whole, they may ariſe from the goodneſs of the Deity." Origin of Evil, p. 505.

* "God is to be conſidered under the character of a Moral "Governor, and therefore in order to approve his goodneſs, he "muſt conſult, not ſo much the happineſs of any particular "perſon, as what may, upon the whole, be for the benefit of "all that moral kingdom over which he preſides, and may at "the ſame time ſuit the majeſty and honour of his government: now for any thing we certainly know, the everlaſting "miſery of ſome ſinful creatures may be the moſt effectual "means of anſwering theſe ends in harmony with each other." Doddridge's Lectures, Vol. 2. p. 472. 4th edition.

damnation. When ſinners are puniſhed in conſequence of having neglected their day of viſitation, God does not intend their reformation and happineſs, becauſe they will then call upon him in vain. Prov. i. 24—28. Matt. xxv. 10—12. Luke xiii. 24, 28.

It has ſometimes been aſſerted, that the conſideration of limited puniſhment is quite ſufficient to determine every reaſonable being on the ſide of virtue. The above contains a ſufficient reply to this aſſertion; but it may not be amiſs to remark further, that the happineſs ariſing from the practice of virtue, both in this life and that which is to come, ought to determine the choice of every reaſonable and accountable being, though there were no future puniſhment at all. Shall we then infer that warnings are unneceſſary? This would be to reflect on the wiſdom of God in employing them. We muſt therefore infer what is true in fact, that men do not always follow the dictates of reaſon, that they are carried away by the violence of corrupt paſſions and appetites. And we cannot be ſure that the threatening of endleſs puniſhment is not neceſſary to counteract the influence of our depravity. Certainly when we conſider the powerful influence of ſinful habits and examples, we cannot poſſibly ſuppoſe, that they are likely to be counteracted by the threatening, or rather promiſe of puniſhment, which is *corrective* in its nature, *moderate* in its quantity, *limited* in its duration, and *glorious* in its end.

" 3. If the juſtice of eternal puniſhment be diſ-
" coverable by us, it muſt be from God's having
" pointed it out as the wages of ſin, and threatened
" ſinners with it in the Scriptures. The Scriptures
" declare the wages of ſin to be *death*, not an *end-*
" *leſs life* of torment: that the ſoul that ſinneth ſhall
" *die*, not *live* in miſery to all eternity." *

An

* *Examination*, p. 38.

An advocate for *Annihilation* might have made theſe reflections without exciting much ſurprize, but for ſuch a comment to come from the pen of an *Univerſaliſt* is truly wonderful; for if the death threatened be oppoſed to exiſtence, it is as true that there will be no reſtoration, as that puniſhment will not be eternal. Death is not always oppoſed to exiſtence, becauſe ſome are dead while they live, 1 Tim. v. 6. Mr. W. muſt believe that the death threatened is a *life of torment*, or he muſt retract what he has written about "hell being inexpreſſibly "more dreadful than the moſt racking pains human "nature is capable of bearing in the preſent ſtate;"* and ſince there is no promiſe, of deliverance from the torment, annexed to the threatening, there is no ground for hope that the puniſhment will have an end. And here I will take occaſion to remark, that in the repreſentations which the Scriptures give of the deciſion of the laſt day, not a ſingle hint is dropped about limited and corrective puniſhment; yet no ſeaſon could be ſo proper for that purpoſe. We might have expected that the judge would exhort them to profit ſpeedily by theſe neceſſary and wholeſome correctives, that they might the ſooner be reſtored to that happineſs which he was ſo anxious they ſhould enjoy. Divine judgments in this life, when deſigned to be corrective, have uſually been accompanied with exhortations, promiſes, &c. But not a word of this ſort is found in the final ſentence of the ſupreme Judge. It is rather remarkable that Mr. W. has not examined any more of the threatenings: perhaps he did not think it ſafe to venture far upon this dangerous ground. The threatenings which point out eternal puniſhment as the wages of ſin, are brought forward, and defended, by Mr. Fuller in his letters to Mr. Vidler, to which I refer the reader.

We

* Examination, p. 16.

We have juſt cauſe of complaint againſt the Univerſaliſts for repreſenting us as imputing to the Almighty, a boſom enflamed with rage and boiling with vengeance when he executes judgment on impenitent ſinners. He aſſures us that he taketh no pleaſure in the death of a ſinner. It is no unuſual ſight to ſee an earthly judge, with tears in his eyes, pronouncing upon the criminal the ſentence of condemnation. And if the human mind may be entirely free from rage and vengeance on ſuch an occaſion why ſhould we aſcribe theſe wicked paſſions to the Deity? But ſuch a repreſentation ſerves their purpoſe.

Section IV.

On the Love *of* GOD.

"AS God is love," ſays Mr. Wright, "he never "can act towards any creature at any time, but "from a principle of love. If it be admitted that "God once loved all his creatures, how can it be "proved that he will ever ceaſe to love them? If "his love be himſelf, if he be incorruptible, un- "changeable, without variableneſs, or ſhadow of "turning, how can he ever ceaſe to love thoſe "whom he once loved? To ſuppoſe the love of "God to any of his creatures may become extinct, "is, in effect, to ſuppoſe that ſo much of himſelf "may become extinct, for he is love; that he may "ſo far vary and change; which is impoſſible. The "ſins of men cannot deſtroy the love of God to "them, for the reaſons already alleged. Notwith- "ſtanding all their ſins, he hath given the fulleſt "demonſtration of the continuance of his love to

them

" them, in giving his well-beloved Son to die for " them, as ſinners. If God will never ceaſe to " love all his creatures, it follows, that he will " never ceaſe to deſire their happineſs. And if " what his ſoul deſireth, ſhould never take place, " would it not prove either a deficiency in his wiſdom " or in his power? " †

The above reaſoning will apply againſt the introduction of miſery with exactly the ſame force as againſt its endleſs continuance. For if God never can act towards *any creature*, at *any time*, but from a principle of love; if this be accompanied with deſires for their happineſs; and if his wiſdom and his power are engaged to fulfil his deſires; then it muſt neceſſarily follow, that it is impoſſible for *any creature*, at *any time*, to be unhappy. As this concluſion cannot be admitted, the premiſes muſt be given up.

I do not very well underſtand what Mr. W. means by the phraſe, *if his love be himſelf*. Does he ſuppoſe that love is not merely an attribute of God, but the Divine ſubſtance, eſſence, or nature, as ſome German enthuſiaſts have wildly imagined? From ſome parts of the preceding paragraph one would think he has entertained ſuch an idea. It is not countenanced, however, by the phraſe, *God is love;* for it is alſo written, *God is a Spirit, God is light, &c.* Now if we may ſay with propriety, *Love is God*, we may likewiſe affirm, *Spirit is God, Light is God, &c.* By this method of interpreting Scripture, we may ſoon have as many Gods as the heathens had, and with natures as oppoſite to each other.

Mr. W. urges the immutability of the Divine nature as a proof that the love of God to his creatures cannot become extinct; for ſays he, " to ſuppoſe the

† *Hints on the* Reſtoration, p. 4—5.

the love of God to any of his creatures may become extinct, is, in effect, to ſuppoſe that ſo much of himſelf may become extinct, for he is love; that he may, ſo far, vary and change; which is impoſſible." According to this logic, we may prove, not only that the love of God to his creatures cannot become *extinct*, but alſo that it cannot *vary:* for "to ſuppoſe a *diminution* of the love of God to any of his creatures, is to ſuppoſe a diminution of himſelf, for he is love; that he may ſo far vary and change; which is impoſſible." And again "to ſuppoſe an *increaſe* of the love of God to any of his creatures, is to ſuppoſe an increaſe of himſelf, for he is love; that he may, ſo far, vary and change; which is impoſſible." From hence it follows, that the love of God to his creatures has no relation to their moral characters, but that he loves the devils as much now, as he did when they were angels of light doing his pleaſure; and that he has the ſame love to a murderer while he is imbruing his hands in the blood of the innocent, as he has to a ſaint while zealouſly employed in the practice of piety and virtue.

The love of God is diſplayed in concert with his other perfections, and is never indulged to an extent that would hinder their harmonious operation. *God is light*, or holineſs, as well as love; his love, therefore, cannot be inconſiſtent with his holineſs. Mr. W. will allow that God loved the angels with *delight* before they ſinned; but to ſay that his love to them was the ſame after they ſinned, is, in other words, to ſay, that he taketh pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs, which is inconſiſtent with his holineſs, and which is the damning ſin of men. 2 Theſſ. ii. 12. It muſt therefore, be granted that God's love of complacence towards his creatures becomes extinct with the extinction of virtue in them, and this ſpoils Mr. W's argument."† Mr.

† "God loves his creatures beyond the love of the ten "dereſt

Mr. W. thinks that " the ſins of men cannot deſtroy the love of God to them, becauſe he hath demonſtrated his love to them in giving his Son to die for them, as ſinners." I grant that God loves ſinners, but not *as ſinners;* for that would be to love ſin, which is perfectly contrary to his nature. It is no crime of ours that we come into the world with a ſinful nature, and therefore it is not ſo wonderful that our being in ſuch a ſtate did not hinder God from loving us, and ſending his Son to bring us to holineſs and glory. For we cannot well ſuppoſe that a God of love would bring a race of rational beings into exiſtence without affording them the means of virtue and happineſs. But to infer from thence, that thoſe who only abuſe theſe means, inſtead of improving them, muſt ſtill continue to be the objects of God's gracious regard, is a concluſion which the premiſes do not warrant. But perhaps the doctrine of original ſin, or derived depravity, may have no place in Mr. W.'s creed.

The bounds of that love which was manifeſted in the gift of Chriſt is fixed in the New Teſtament: " God *ſo* loved the world, that he gave his only " begotten Son, that whoſoever *believeth* in him " ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life." John iii. 16. I wiſh to know by what authority Mr. W. extends it to obſtinate unbelievers and devils? It is a conſideration calculated to excite our warmeſt gratitude, that " when we were yet ſinners " Chriſt died for us;" yet if as ſinners we continue to oppoſe his gracious deſigns concerning us, the time may arrive, when " He that made us *will*

" *not*

" dereſt and moſt compaſſionate Father; but always with this " *one* exception, that he loves virtue, righteouſneſs, and goodneſs ſtill better than them. And againſt no ſort of ſinners " do the Scriptures ſpeak with greater indignation of ſeverity, " than againſt thoſe who preſumptuouſly make the goodneſs of " God an occaſion of ſinning, and turn even the grace of God " itſelf into wantonneſs." Clarke's Sermons, vol. i. p. 219. 7th edition.

" *not have mercy on us*, and he that formed us, " *will ſhew us no favour.*" Iſa. xxvii. 11.

Dr. Ryland charged the Univerſaliſts with taking off an infinite weight from our motives againſt ſin. To this Mr. Wright replied, that " the moſt power- " ful motive to obedience is the *ſtrongeſt motive* " *againſt ſin*; that *love is the only genuine principle* " *of obedience*; and that *the government of God is not* " *the reign of terror.*" *

The diſpute is not about the *ſtrongeſt* motive againſt ſin; for, ſuppoſing love to operate moſt powerfully, it may ſtill be true that the Univerſaliſts take off an infinite weight from our motives againſt ſin, by deſtroying the force of the threatenings: and this Mr. W. has done by aſſerting that love is the *only* principle of obedience, and by excluding *terror* from the government of God.

Mr. W. proceeds to the proof. " Why do ſin- " ners continue in rebellion againſt God? Becauſe " they have no inclination to obey him. Why have " they no inclination to obey him? Becauſe they " do not love him. Why do they not love him? " Becauſe they are ſtrangers to his love; if they ſaw " his lovelineſs and perceived his love to them, they " certainly would love and obey him. Can they " be brought to love and obey God by having " their minds inſpired with tormenting fear?"† In reply to the whole I obſerve,

1. Love is *not* the *only* genuine principle of obedience. Noah was *moved with fear* to build the ark, Heb. xi. 7. Jeſus Chriſt inculcates the ſame principle upon his diſciples: *Fear him who is able to deſtroy both body and ſoul in hell*; *yea*, *I ſay unto you*, *Fear him.* Though love may be allowed to be the moſt noble principle, yet fear will appear to

* Examination, p. 18. † Ibid.

to be equally neceſſary, when we conſider the nature of man, and the circumſtances in which he is placed.

2. The government of God *is* the reign of terror, to the finally impenitent; and the conſideration of it is urged as a motive againſt ſin. *Knowing therefore the* TERROR *of the Lord, we perſuade men.* 2 Cor. v. 11.

3. If ſinners ſaw God's lovelineſs, and perceived his love to them, they certainly would *not all* love and obey him, if we may judge of the future by the paſt: "becauſe when they *knew* God, they *glorified him not* as God," Rom. i. 21. The Jews certainly perceived the amiableneſs of the divine character, and his particular regard for their welfare, by a long train of gracious providences in their favour; and yet, as a nation, they did not love and obey him. The Apoſtle Paul alſo ſpeaks of ſome who deſpiſe the riches of Divine goodneſs, and harden their hearts againſt it, Rom. ii. 4, 5. If all men muſt be brought to virtue by a ſight of God's lovelineſs, and of his love to them, and *only that* will bring them to it, what end can be anſwered by future puniſhment that is even limited in its duration? And why does not God make the diſcovery to them *now*? If they cannot be brought to love and obey God, by having their minds inſpired with the tormenting fear of puniſhment, can it be done by the infliction of puniſhment? Why then are they puniſhed at all? The fact is, that, in his zeal againſt endleſs puniſhment, Mr. W. has loſt ſight of both *corrective* and *limited* puniſhment, though they are the two chief corner ſtones of his ſpiritual building. But I have proved above, that *the terror of the Lord* ſupplies a motive againſt ſin: this motive is of infinite weight when urged by an anti-univerſaliſt: this motive, however, Mr. W. has neglected: we are therefore juſtified in

charging him with taking off an infinite weight from our motives againſt ſin.

But Mr. W. undertakes to ſhew, that the charge properly belongs to his opponent's ſyſtem. "That "ſyſtem,(ſays he) which throws a thick veil over God's "infinite lovelineſs, by repreſenting him as infinitely "wrathful and vindictive, is the ſyſtem which takes "off an infinite weight from our motives againſt ſin, "by diminiſhing, beyond calculation, the moſt powerful motives to obedience."*

One would think that no man in his ſenſes would be hardy enough to affirm that we take off an infinite weight from the motives againſt ſin by repreſenting God as threatening to puniſh it for ever; yet this is done under the pretence that the motive drawn from the love of God is diminiſhed in the ſame proportion that vice is puniſhed: if it were ſo, Mr. W's conſequence would not follow; it would only prove that one motive is weakened as another is ſtrengthened; ſo that, upon the whole, there would be no diminution of their weight againſt ſin. But the motive drawn from the love of God is not diminiſhed at all by the threatening of eternal puniſhment. On the ground of Divine Love, we teach that glory inconceivable in degree, and eternal in duration, will be the reward of obedience. Mr. W. cannot poſſibly make *this* motive ſtronger; and while he continues to reject the *other*, he muſt not be offended if we continue to prefer our charge againſt him.

I know that in his pamphlet, Mr. W. ſpeaks of future puniſhment as a motive againſt ſin; but it is alſo certain that in the above paragraph he diſavows it; and it is no part of my buſineſs to reconcile his contradictions. Should he, however, allow that future puniſhment ſupplies us with a motive againſt ſin, he muſt recollect, that the ſtrength of the motive will

* Examination, p. 19.

e in proportion to the duration of the punish-
this motive will therefore be infinitely ſtronger
urged by thoſe who hold the doctrine of endleſs
ment, than when urged by the advocates for its
l duration.

a queſtion of vaſt importance, and which I
Miniſters in general do not ſufficiently attend to,
er the *love* or the *terror* of God operates moſt
fully *at firſt* on the minds of ſinners? If they
governed by their reaſon, there would be no
ty to preach the *terror of the Lord* to them;
e as ſoon as they perceived that their intereſt
uty are united, they would begin to promote
ne by the practice of the other; but he muſt
very ſuperficial acquaintance with men who
ot know, that, in general, they are governed
ir corrupt paſſions and appetites, in oppoſition
dictates of Reaſon and Religion. The privi-
of Religion will never operate as a motive on
ot minds to practiſe its duties. Tell them about
mforts of the Spirit; the ſweets of communion
God in religious exerciſes; and the happineſs of
n, as conſiſting in the viſion of God, and the
y of ſaints, angels, and Jeſus Chriſt; in inveſti-
the works and ways of God; ſinging his
s; in loving and ſerving him for evermore; I
ell them of theſe things; but, ſince they have
ſpoſitions to enjoy them, they will expreſs no
s after them. You might as well caſt pearls
e ſwine. The temper of their minds muſt be
ed, before ſuch motives will have any influence
them.*

A miniſter

" Since the pleaſure of any thing reſults from the agree-
t between it and the deſire, what ſatisfaction can *ſpiritual*
yments give unto a *carnal mind?* Alas! what delight
ld it be to the ſwine to be wrapt in fine linen and laid in
irs? His ſenſes are not gratified by any ſuch delicacies;
would he feel any thing beſides the torment of being with-

A minister can have no hope of success till he has made sinners sensible of their state. *The whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick.* Jesus Christ *came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* Let him tell them of their danger, that upon their present conduct depends their everlasting condition, that if they die in sin they will be *weeping, and wailing, and gnashing their teeth,* in *unquenchable fire;* that they have no security against the arrest of death; that hell may now be *moved from beneath to meet them at their coming;* let him, I say, found these awful truths in their ears with the energy of a man alarmed at their dreadful condition, and some, at least, will begin to see their danger, flee from the wrath to come, and enquire what they must do to be saved.* Then is the time to unfold the love of God to them. It will inspire them with hope and devotion. In answer to prayer they will obtain pardoning mercy; a consciousness of that mercy will fill them with love, and then every passion, appetite, and

" held from the mire. And as little complacency would a brutish soul find in those pure and refined pleasures, which can " only upbraid, not satisfy him." Causes of the decay of Christian piety, chap. i.

* " God lays hold on that powerful principle of self-preservation within us to oblige us by any means, to be good, wise, " and happy; and if the love of goodness, wisdom, and happiness cannot prevail, (as they cannot possibly in the nature of " things at first, over habitual sinners) to drive us into that good " he intends for us, and compel us to come in, through fear of " the dread punishments of the contrary practices. Therefore " he has, in his great wisdom and goodness positively acquainted " us with those endless unendurable torments to rouze us out of " that desperate inconsideration and lethargy, infatuation, and " insensibility, which are incident to an habit of sinning. That " since the impenitent sinner must one day suffer them in *reality*, he " might every day think of, and suffer them in his thoughts, till " the pain thereof changes the course of his life; and then in a " few days, he will surely turn and repent, and precipitate himself into virtue and happiness, taking sanctuary in the fear of " God, in order to rejoice in the arms of his favour." Cure of *Deism*, vol. i. p. 319, 320. 3d edit.

ıwer of their minds will unite to impel them
l in the paths of piety and virtue.

l now enquire whether the Scriptures favour
a that the *fear* of the Lord is the *beginning*
ion. Jeſus Chriſt addreſſed the fears of dar-
ıers: "Ye ſerpents, ye generation of vipers,
can ye eſcape the damnation of hell?" Paul
l the fears of Felix. While "he reaſoned on
eouſneſs, temperance, and judgment to come,
t *trembled*;" and though the Apoſtle did not
in his deſign, yet no one will queſtion the
ty of the method which he adopted in order
n it. The three thouſand that were converted
day of Pentecoſt, were moved with fear;
/ were pricked in their hearts, and ſaid, Men
brethren, what ſhall we do?" The Philip-
ılor "came *trembling* and fell down before
and Silas, and ſaid, Sirs, what muſt I do to
ıved?". Examples might be multiplied, but
ıeceſſary. It is evident that religion generally
with fear. And ſhould a miniſter neglect to
this paſſion, by leaving out the *terror of the*
he may preach *the love of God, the joys of*
moral virtue, or what he pleaſes, till his
cleave to the roof of his mouth, with-
nverting one ſinner from the error of his

Section V.

On the Knowledge *of* God.

On the ſuppoſition that ſome will be wretched for ever, Mr. Weaver remarks, "Jeſus Chriſt could not "intend to ſave ſuch when he made them, becauſe "at that very time he knew they would not be "ſaved. Now if he knew before he made them "that they would not be ſaved, did he not make "ſuch for miſery? If ſo, is he not the author of "evil? And let ſuch as maintain eternal miſery get "clear of it if they can." *

This reaſoning will equally apply againſt limited puniſhment. "Jeſus Chriſt could not intend to prevent ſuch from being puniſhed for a ſeaſon when he made them, becauſe at that very time he knew they would be puniſhed for a ſeaſon. Now if he knew before he made them that they would be thus puniſhed, did he not make ſuch for miſery? If ſo, is he not the author of evil? And let ſuch as maintain limited miſery get clear of it if they can."

It is ſuitable to our nature and the relations which ſubſiſt betwixt God and us, that he ſhould exhort us to repentance, and promiſe us ſalvation on the terms of the goſpel. And when he does this, to call in queſtion the ſincerity of his intention, and to charge him with being the author of ſin, becauſe he knew beforehand that ſome would not repent and receive the

* Free Thoughts, Preface, p. 25. 2d edit.

the goſpel, is not ſo much to diſprove endleſs puniſhment, as to deny moral liberty to man, and to lead us to atheiſm, by repreſenting the ſtate of the moral world as inconſiſtent with the Divine Perfections. Dr. Clarke has well obſerved, "Whatever is in itſelf, and in the nature of things, reaſonable to be done, 'tis fit ſhould actually be done: and it is never the more nor the leſs reaſonable, for things being known or not known beforehand. The reaſon of God's ſending exhortations to wicked men, is not that he himſelf is ignorant what they will do, but that upon *their own account* 'tis reaſonable they ſhould be ſo exhorted: and if the thing be reaſonable *in itſelf*, it cannot ceaſe to be ſo, upon the account of foreknowledge."*

It is allowed Jeſus Chriſt *knew* that ſome would be miſerable. Mr. W. infers from this, that he made them for miſery; and from this inference he concludes again, that Jeſus Chriſt is the author of evil. Mr. W.'s way of drawing inferences goes to prove, as fully upon his own ſyſtem as upon ours, that man is a neceſſary agent, and that God is the author of all his actions, both good and bad. Thus, God *knew* man would ſin: God, therefore, *made man for* ſin: God, therefore, is the *author* of ſin. But things may be foreknown without being predeſtinated. I foreknow that the ſun will riſe in the morning, and that both the ſun and moon will be eclipſed a certain number of times the enſuing year; but I am not vain enough to think, that my knowledge is, in any ſenſe, the *cauſe* of theſe events taking place.†

There

* Clarke's Sermons, Vol. i. p. 166, 167.

† "God foreſees, or rather ſees the actions of free agents, becauſe they *will be*, not that they will be, becauſe he foreſees them. If I ſee an object in a certain place, the veracity of my ſenſes ſuppoſed, it is certain that object is there: but yet it cannot be ſaid, it is there *becauſe* I ſee it there, or that my

The following argument, in reference to one of Mr. Benſon's ſermons on the day of judgment, is borrowed by Mr. Weaver from Petitpierre on Divine Goodneſs. "Can we deny that the divine mind was "perfectly acquainted with the uſe they would make "of exiſtence? and is it not true, that exiſtence "beſtowed upon ſuch terms, muſt be to the creature "an infinite evil; and that the irreſiſtible fiat which "flung them into being, was the greateſt evil that "could poſſibly befal them; and this at a time when "they could have no demerit, but were perfectly "innocent? But I leave theſe inſurmountable diffi-"culties to Mr. Benſon to determine, how an irre-"ſiſtible act, which produces infinite evil to innocent "beings, is to be qualified."*

Whatever ſtrength there is in this argument will return with equal force againſt the doctrine of limited miſery. "Can we deny that the Divine mind was perfectly acquainted with the uſe they would make of exiſtence? And is it not true that exiſtence beſtowed upon ſuch terms muſt be the greateſt evil that could poſſibly befal them;† and this at a time when they could have no demerit but were perfectly innocent? But I leave theſe inſurmountable difficulties with Mr. W. Perhaps he is able to determine, how an irre-ſiſtible act, which brings upon innocent beings the greateſt

"my ſeeing it there, is the *cauſe* of its being there; but becauſe "it is there, therefore I *ſee* it there. It is the object that deter-"mines my ſenſation: and ſo in the other caſe, it is a future "*choice* of a free agent, that determines the preſcience, which "yet may be infallibly true." Religion of Nature delineated, p. 102.

* Free Thoughts, p. 18.

† At firſt ſight, ſome may think theſe expreſſions too ſtrong, but it muſt be recollected that the Univerſaliſts contend it would be inconſiſtent with the Divine Perfections, for God to puniſh ſinners for ever. And ſince God cannot poſſibly act inconſiſt-ently with his perfections, limited miſery muſt be, according to the Univerſaliſts, the greateſt evil that can poſſibly befal a creature.

greateſt evil that can poſſibly befal them, is to be qualified."

It is granted that God knew the uſe, or rather abuſe which the incorrigible would make of their exiſtence. But it is enquired whether "exiſtence "beſtowed upon ſuch terms, be not, to the crea- "ture, an infinite evil?" Exiſtence beſtowed upon terms is what I do not underſtand. Mr. W. however ſuppoſes, that, upon our ſyſtem, the exiſtence of thoſe who periſh is beſtowed upon them on the terms of weeping, wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth for ever: and this he thinks is evident, becauſe God *knew*, when he made them, they would come to that end. But it is demanded, in the name of common ſenſe, whether every thing which God foreſees a man will do, or ſuffer, is a condition of his exiſtence? If ſo, a condition of Mr. W.'s exiſtence was, that he ſhould write in favour of the Doctrine of Reſtoration; and a condition of mine was, that I ſhould write againſt it. Pharoah and his hoſt had their exiſtence beſtowed on them, on the terms of following the Iſraelites, and being drowned in the Red Sea; and the inhabitants of Sodom had their exiſtence upon the terms of committing iniquity with greedineſs, and being deſtroyed by fire and brimſtone from heaven!

Mr. W. thinks the conduct of the Almighty, in giving exiſtence to ſuch as finally periſh, "cannot "be qualified," becauſe "exiſtence to ſuch was the "greateſt evil that could poſſibly befal them; and "this at a time when they were perfectly innocent." If it were true that God brought the greateſt evil upon innocent creatures, I would not undertake to juſtify his character. But this be far from the righteous Governor of the world with whom we have to do. Exiſtence, ſimply conſidered, is not an evil, otherwiſe evil is eſſential to God, and every other being

being that exists; but it is supposed to become an evil, in the case under consideration, on account of the misery which *will be* annexed to it. I answer, If misery change existence into an evil, it must do this after and not *before* it is added to existence; for neither the foreknowledge of God, nor any thing else, can make that to operate as a cause of any thing which has no being. Now the misery of hell is not inflicted upon *innocent*, but upon *guilty* creatures. Existence then is not an evil to innocent beings; and therefore Mr. W's wicked charge against the Almighty falls to the ground.

The grand question is stated by Dr. Chauncey, thus, "If God knew that some free agents would "make themselves unhappy, notwithstanding the "utmost efforts of his wisdom to prevent it, why "did he create them?" It is not supposed that any are created merely to display the sovereignty of the Almighty Creator in the infliction of eternal torments: "This," as the pious and judicious Dr. Doddridge observes, "is of all incredible things, "the most incredible." If no valuable end can be answered by their existence, no doubt but the goodness of the Divine Sovereignty would have been more fully displayed, had they never existed. But it has been shewn under Sect. 3, that their punishment, by operating as a warning, is useful in reclaiming sinners, and in preserving the saints in their obedience. And it cannot be proved that any would have been saved without the influence of such warnings and examples. And now the question assumes a new form, *Whether it would have been better, to suffer a part of the human race to bring upon themselves destruction, when Divine Providence would make their fall the means of the stability and happiness of the rest; or, not to give existence to the human race at all?* This question is easily answered, on the supposition that a majority of the human race will be finally

finally happy.* For God may furely create as many orders of beings as he pleafes, without any impeachment of his goodnefs, provided the fum of happinefs in each, exceeds the fum of mifery.

Although an Univerfalift cannot deny me the right to affume, that only a very fmall proportion of the human race will finally perifh; yet fome profeffing chriftians, perhaps, may think this is going too far. Let the following confiderations be attended to:

1. At the loweft computation, at leaft a third part of the human race die under feven years of age. I feel no hefitation in faying, thefe all go to a place of happinefs.†

2. It is probable there has been, in paft ages, more religion than has been noticed by hiftorians. Poverty when not extreme, is favourable to piety. The higher orders of fociety poffefs the means of gratifying their corrupt propenfities, and by repeated gratifications they are formed into habits, which, in many cafes, become unconquerable; whereas the poor, thro' the indigence of their circumftances, are induced to fubdue thofe inclinations which they cannot indulge, and to confole themfelves with the pleafures which religion affords. But private, filent virtue, fuch as that which dwells in the humble cottage,

* "If the permitting thofe few to fmart under the effects of "their ill choice were the very means and motive by which "the reft were induced to make a good one, and perhaps all "would be feduced, if not fixed in a right choice by the terror "of fuch examples, it would ftill be agreeable to Goodnefs to "fuffer them to make the choice and feel the effects of it." King's Origin of Evil, Law's Note, p. 489.

† "We do not know that the greater part of mankind are "eternally miferable: perhaps all infants may be faved, and "fuch univerfal virtue may hereafter prevail, for fucceeding, "and thofe very long-lived and fruitful generations, as fhall turn "the balance of *number*, *even* among the adult, on the fide "*of religion and happinefs.*" Doddridge's Lectures, Vol. 2. p. 478.

tage, generally eſcapes the attention of the Hiſtorian. He fills his pages with only accounts of deſpots, tyrants, prelates, diſſenſions in church and ſtate, &c. To judge, therefore of the ſtate of religion, in any country, or in any age, by what Hiſtorians in general have recorded, is like forming a judgment of the ſtate of health in a kingdom by viſiting an hoſpital.

3. Far more people, even in the preſent age, are living under the influence of religion, than is generally believed. Many are hid from public obſervation by their modeſty and poverty. Virtue in many perſons makes but little noiſe. The good Prophet thought he had ſtood alone, when there were ſeven thouſand in Iſrael who had not bowed the knee to Baal.

It is very uſual too, to attach a greater degree of importance to the opinions which are peculiar to certain ſects, than in juſtice they deſerve; hence, when we have ſeen, in other ſects and parties of profeſſing Chriſtians, a conduct correſponding with the precepts of the goſpel, inſtead of exerciſing that charity which *believeth and hopeth all things*, we are employed in endeavouring to reconcile their conduct with hypocriſy; which has led to the concluſion, that ſome perſons, without grace, will go farther in the practice of morality than others go with it. This ſentiment tends to ſubvert the whole goſpel ſyſtem; for if falſe principles will carry a man as far as true ones, and in ſome caſes farther, it may very reaſonably be demanded, *wherefore then ſerveth the goſpel?* If men would only put that favourable conſtruction upon propriety of character which candour demands, many thouſands would be conſidered as belonging to the houſehold of faith and the family of heaven, who are now looked upon as *aliens from the commonwealth of Iſrael, and ſtrangers to the Covenants of Promiſe.*

4. If, in addition to a third part of the human race, who die in their childhood, the many who paſs into happineſs unnoticed from obſcure ſituations in life, and the multitudes of pious people whom bigotry anathematizes as damnable heretics, we add, all thoſe who are pretty generally acknowledged to be the people of God, with all idiots, and the chief part of thoſe who die between the age of ſeven and twelve, (and who can doubt but moſt of theſe are received to happineſs after death?) it will require no very great ſtretch of faith and charity to conclude, that hitherto a majority of the human race have attained to felicity in the eternal world. And if we look forward the proſpect will brighten; for,

5. There is an age approaching, during which righteouſneſs will be univerſal. "*The earth ſhall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the ſea*, Iſa. xi, 9. The Apoſtle John informs us, that the duration of that age will be a *thouſand years*. The numbers which deſignate the duration of the reign of Anti-Chriſt are almoſt univerſally allowed to be prophetic numbers, and that a day muſt be interpreted to mean a year. And why ſhould the term of the Meſſiah's Reign be explained in a more rigid ſenſe? Underſtand them both by the ſame rule of interpretation, and the duration of the age of righteouſneſs will be 360,000 years. To ſtrengthen this opinion, obſerve, (1.) That during that age the life of man will be protracted to near, if not quite a thouſand years. See Iſa. lxv. 20, 21, 22. A perſon will be a child, i. e. in the firſt ſtage of life at the age of one hundred years. It is therefore no improbable conjecture, that according to the regular courſe of nature, men will then live about a thouſand years. It is alſo obſerved, "As the days of a tree, are the days of my people." Now it is ſuppoſed by ſome hiſtorians and travellers that ſome of the Cedars of Lebanon have ſtood for near a thouſand years. (2.) Several generations will paſs away during that age. See Pſa. lxxii. 5. Ezek. xxxvii.

25. The phraſe, *all generations*, muſt certainly include in it many generations. No man, who will be at the trouble to examine the contexts can doubt but the above texts refer to a future age. And if there will be many generations of men in that age, each of which will live a thouſand years, or nearly, then the thouſand years of the Apoſtle John cannot be interpreted literally,—they muſt intend many thouſand years; and I ſee no reaſon why we ſhould ſtop ſhort of 360,000. But what a ſcene here opens to our view! Conſider the myriads that will be tranſlated to heaven during this happy period, and it will not excite ſurpriſe, if the number of the loſt of mankind will bear no greater proportion to the number of the ſaved, than the executions at Newgate do to the inhabitants of the Metropolis.

Here then I think the objection is fairly met, and fully anſwered. Had not God created thoſe whom he foreſaw would periſh, the influence of their example would have been wanting. But God urges theſe examples as warnings to us: ſuch warnings therefore are neceſſary guardians of virtue, for God does nothing in vain: ſo that without them vice and miſery would have reigned univerſally; and therefore, according to the objection, not one of the human race ought to have exiſted. But it is better, upon the whole, that the human race do exiſt, ſince a large majority of them will be finally happy: and thus the goodneſs of God, in creating thoſe who periſh, is reconciled with his foreknowledge of their perdition.

But if it were admitted, for arguments' ſake, that the number of the loſt of mankind will exceed the number of the ſaved, yet the objection may be anſwered another way. It is highly probable, that there is a plurality of inhabited worlds;—that the inhabitants of other worlds ſtand in a higher rank in the ſcale of being than the inhabitants of this world;—that the number of the finally loſt will bear no pro-

to the number of the ſaved ;—and that the
ınts of all the worlds in the univerſe ſtand in
ɔlation to one another: Hence the exemplary
ıent of men may be uſeful to keep other orders
ligent beings in a ſtate of ſubjection and obe-
and thus perfectly accord with the Goodneſs

here is a plurality of inhabited worlds. It is
that the other planets of this ſyſtem are worlds,
r reſpects ſimilar to ours. Like this, each per-
s diurnal revolution round its own axis, and its
revolution round the ſun ; ſo that they have
gular return of day and night, ſummer and win-
'hey alſo, in common with us, derive from the
h light and heat which may ſerve them, as well
for the purpoſes of life and vegetation. Thus
that in ſome of the moſt important particulars,
ıer planets of this ſyſtem are as well provided
is, for the ſupport of living creatures.* And
ve conſider how this world is crowded with in-
ıts, we ſhall find it difficult to ſuppoſe that they
a perpetual waſte and deſolation.†
he fixed ſtars ſhine with inherent light, they are
ınd, moſt probably, have planets rolling round
their diſtances from each other being ſufficiently
o admit of this. And we cannot ſee for what
purpoſe they were created. It may indeed be
ſaid,

Iſa. xlv. 18, we read, that "God formed the earth.—He
ɔd it not in vain. He formed it to be inhabited." This
proves, that a world without inhabitants is created in
ut God made nothing in vain : it follows, therefore, that
ɔrld is inhabited.

know it is a thing uncertain and unrevealed to us, whe-
ıll theſe globes be inhabited or not : but he that conſider-
ıat there is ſcarce any uninhabitable place on earth, or in
ater, or air, but men or beaſts, or birds or fiſhes, or flies,
ırms occupy almoſt all parts of it, will think it a proba-
ſo near a certainty, as not to be much doubted of." Bax-
he Chriſtian Rel. p. 389.

ſaid, that the light of the ſtars is very uſeful to us; but it may be anſwered, that one more moon, at a convenient diſtance, would have been much more ſo. Neither will it explain the matter to ſay, that they are ſpread abroad through the heavens for ornament, becauſe many of them are not viſible to the naked eye: and I believe no man can think God placed them at ſuch an amazing diſtance, for the entertainment of a few gazing Philoſophers with their glaſſes. But when, on the other hand, we take in the idea that the planets of this ſyſtem and of the other thouſands of ſyſtems are all inhabited by intelligent creatures, we are loſt in aſtoniſhment, while contemplating the wonderful works and ways of the Creator and Preſerver of the Univerſe.*

If every world be inhabited by free Agents, it has been ſaid, that every world may, at one time or other, be in a ſtate of apoſtaſy, and, in that caſe, it would be neceſſary for the Son of God, to be almoſt perpetually travelling from one world to another, and, in the ſeveral natures of the inhabitants, to make ſatisfaction for their ſins. But the probability is, as will be ſhewn below, that there is not another world of intelligent beings whoſe natures and circumſtances are ſimilar to ours; ſo that, ſuppoſing their apoſtaſy, it will not be neceſſary to treat them exactly in the ſame manner. The ſacred Scriptures have ſettled this point by aſſuring us that Chriſt died for ſin *once;* He dieth

* "The moon in many reſpects reſembles our earth. In her, "as well as on our globe, we diſcover continents, and ſeas, "mountains, vallies, iſlands, and gulphs. Such ſtriking ſimi- "litudes authorize us to admit others, and to conclude, that in "the moon there are minerals and vegetables, animals and ra- "tional creatures. The analogy between the moon and the "other planets, leads us to extend the ſame conjectures to *them*: "and as each fixed ſtar has, according to all appearance, like "our ſun, its particular planets, ſo theſe planets undoubtedly re- "ſemble ours.—Thus we ſee around us, an innumerable mul- "titude of worlds, each of which has its peculiar arrangement, "laws, productions, and inhabitants." Sturms Reflects. Vol. ii. p. 185. Clarke's Edit.

dieth *no more ;* death hath *no more* dominion over Him, Rom. vi. 9, 10. The angels, who are probably the next order of beings above men, did not all maintain their primitive innocence; but Jeſus Chriſt will not redeem them, for it is written, "He taketh not hold on angels," Heb. ii. 16.

2. The inhabitants of other worlds ſtand in a higher rank in the ſcale of Being than the inhabitants of this world. I cannot deliver my ſentiments upon this ſubject better, than in the words of the immortal Locke, with a few notes ſubjoined, which I have ſelected from other writers for the ſake of illuſtration. "It is not impoſſible to conceive, nor repugnant to "reaſon that there may be many *ſpecies* of ſpirits, "as much ſeparated and diverſified one from another, "by diſtinct properties, whereof we have no ideas, "as the ſpecies of ſenſible things are diſtinguiſhed one "from another, by qualities which we know, and "obſerve in them. That there ſhould be more *ſpecies* of intelligent creatures above us than there are "of ſenſible and material below us, is probable to "me from hence, that in all the viſible corporeal "world, we ſee no chaſms or gaps. All quite down "from us, the deſcent is by eaſy ſteps, and a continued ſeries of things, that in each remove differ "very little one from the other.*

"There

* "There are ſome living creatures which are raiſed but juſt "above dead matter. To mention only that ſpecies of ſhell "fiſh, which are formed in the faſhion of a cone, that grow to "the ſurface of ſeveral rocks, and immediately die upon being "ſevered from the place where they grow. There are many "other creatures but one remove from theſe, which have no "other ſenſe beſides that of feeling and taſte: others have ſtill "an additional one of hearing: others of ſmell, and others of "ſight. It is wonderful to obſerve by what a gradual progreſs "the world of life advances through a prodigious variety of "ſpecies, before a creature is formed that is complete in all its "ſenſes; and even among theſe, there is ſuch a different degree "of perfection in the ſenſe which one animal enjoys beyond "what appears in another, that tho' the ſenſe in different animals

"There are fiſhes that have wings, and are not "ſtrangers to the airy region; and there are ſome "birds, that are inhabitants of the water; whoſe "blood is cold as that of fiſhes, and their fleſh ſo like "in taſte, that the ſcrupulous are allowed them on "fiſh days. There are animals ſo near of kin both "to birds and beaſts, that they are in the middle "between both: amphibious animals link the terreſ-"trial and aquatic together; ſeals live at land and at "ſea, and porpoiſes have the warm blood and entrails "of a hog, not to mention what is confidently re-"ported of mermaids or ſea men. There are ſome "brutes, that ſeem to have as much knowledge and "reaſon, as ſome that are called men:* and the "animal and vegetable kingdoms are ſo nearly join-"ed that if you will take the loweſt of one, and "the higheſt of the other, there will ſcarce be per-"ceived any great difference between them; and ſo "on till we come to the loweſt and the moſt inorgani-"cal parts of matter,† we ſhall find every where,

"that

"be diſtinguiſhed by the ſame common denomination, it ſeems "almoſt of a different nature. If after this we look into the "ſeveral inward perfections of cunning and ſagacity, or what "we generally call inſtinct, we find them riſing after the "ſame manner imperceptibly one above another, and re-"ceiving additional improvements, according to the ſpecies in "which they are implanted. This progreſs in nature is ſo very "gradual, that the moſt perfect of an inferior ſpecies come very "near to the moſt imperfect of that which is immediately above "it." Spectator, No. 519.

* "The *Orang Outang* has nearly the ſhape and ſtature of a "man, and appears to have ſome ſhare of his intelligence. "They are nimble, ſtrong, and bold; and put themſelves in "a poſture of defence againſt armed hunters. The natives take "them with gins, tame them, and teach them to walk on their "hind feet, employing their hands in other ſervices, as wiping "the glaſſes, pouring out liquor, turning the ſpit, and ſuch "little offices, which they perform with great dexterity." Grand. Mag. for May 1758. See alſo Sturm's Reflect. Vol iv. p. 244.

† "There are in ſome liquors Animalcules ſo ſmall, as, upon "a calculation the whole magnitude of the earth is not large

"enough.

" that ſeveral ſpecies are linked together and differ " but in almoſt inſenſible degrees. And when we " conſider the infinite power and wiſdom of the Maker, " we have reaſon to think that it is ſuitable to the " magnificent harmony of the univerſe, and the great " deſign and infinite goodneſs of the Architect, that " the ſpecies of creatures ſhould alſo, by gentle de- " grees, aſcend upward from us toward his infinite " perfection, as we ſee they gradually deſcend from " us downwards: which if it be probable, we have " reaſon then to be perſuaded, that there are far " more *ſpecies* of creatures above us, than there are " beneath; we being, in degrees of perfection, much " more remote from the infinite Being of God, than " we are from the loweſt ſtate of Being, and that " which approaches neareſt to nothing."*

3. The number of the finally loſt will bear no proportion to the number of the ſaved. If the above conjecture be probable, that all the other orders of intelligent creatures gradually riſe above us, we need be under no alarm reſpecting the fidelity of the principal part of them, ſince in proportion to the excellency of their natures, they are the leſs likely to abuſe their liberty. The whole of the human race are in a fallen ſtate; but under circumſtances which rendered it conſiſtent with the divine perfections to provide a ſcheme of redemption, through which many will be finally happy. The angels are probably the next order

" enough to be a third proportional to thoſe minute floating ani- " mals and the vaſt whales of the ocean. There is contained in " every animalcule the heart that is the fountain of its life, the " muſcles neceſſary to its motions, the glands for the ſecretion " of its fluids, the ſtomach and bowels to digeſt its food, and " other innumerable members, without which it is impoſſible an " animal ſhould ſubſiſt. What ſome philoſophers have dreamed " concerning angels, is true of theſe animalcules, viz. that many " thouſands of them may dance on the point of a ſmall needle." Keil's Introd. to Nat. Philos. p. 56.

* Eſſay on *Human Underſt.* Vol. ii. p. 48, 49. 7th Edit.

order above us. It is certain they did not all apoſtatiſe; and when we conſider their favourable circumſtances, and the great number of good angels ſpoken of in the Scriptures, it will not appear likely that *many* of them left their firſt eſtate. The probability in favour of even partial apoſtaſy will apply to only a very few orders higher, and then of the remaining thouſands of orders, the preſumption is, that they all perſevere in a courſe of virtue.

4. The inhabitants of all the worlds in the univerſe ſtand related to each other; and hence the exemplary puniſhment of men may be uſeful to keep other intelligent beings in their obedience. "It is not unreaſonable to ſuppoſe," ſays Dr. Abernethy,* "that "the affairs of this lower world (principally thoſe of "its chief inhabitants,) have a reſpect to ſuperior "natures, and are extenſively uſeful to the whole ſyſ- "tem of intelligent creatures. That there are in the "univerſe other ſpecies of rational agents beſides "mankind, and above them, cannot well be doubted. "As the ſtate and ſituation of diſtant orbs render "them uſeful to the earth, which may be alſo uſeful "to them in a different way, all conſpiring to make "one regular harmonious ſyſtem of material nature; "the like order may be, and we have reaſon to be- "lieve is eſtabliſhed, among the ſeveral kinds of ra- "tional beings, which, under different particular "œconomies, do all of them together make one "beautiful and moral ſyſtem."

The fallen angels did not exiſt in this world during their day of probation, yet we are informed of their puniſhment, and the Apoſtle Paul warns us againſt "falling into the condemnation of the *Devil*." 1 Tim. iii. 6.

The Apoſtles Jude and Peter alſo, put us in remembrance of their condition with a view to preſerve us from

* *Diſs.* on the Attrib. of God. Vol. ii. p. 138, 140.

reſumptuous ſins. Jude ver. 6. 2 Pet. ii. 4. By
of reaſon, the puniſhment of wicked men may
arning to other worlds of free agents, and thus
t their apoſtaſy.* Hence in creating thoſe who
'or ever, the goodneſs and foreknowledge of
rfectly harmonize. Had God foreſeen that no
ould be brought out of the fall, equivalent to
l which it occaſioned, no doubt but his goodneſs
have prevented it. But when by the puniſh-
f a comparative few, ſo many orders of crea-
re kept in ſubjection, the evil appears ſo little
pariſon of the good, that no objection can lie
the goodneſs of God in giving exiſtence to thoſe
He foreſaw would apoſtatiſe and periſh.
ſhould be objected, that the puniſhment of the
can be of no ſervice to others any longer than
their day of probation, and therefore when
ended, puniſhment ſhould ceaſe; it is ſufficient
y, that if examples of ſuffering, under the ſen-
of everlaſting miſery, be neceſſary to preſerve
n the Univerſe, the God of Truth muſt execute
tence; for it cannot be ſuppoſed that the foun-
of the divine government is laid in a lie. But
be remarked further, that no man can ſay the
ity will not be creating new worlds through
leſs duration. To theſe worlds, as they ſuc-
ceſſively

*How know we, who ſhall ſurvive the preſent world, to
n God may make man's hell a warning? Are not the
now ſet out in Scripture for a warning to man? And
know we what other creatures God hath, to whom
puniſhed ſinners may be a warning? Or whether the
earth wherein righteouſneſs muſt dwell, according to
promiſe (2 Pet. iii. 12, 13.) ſhall not have uſe of this
ng to keep them in their righteouſneſs? As long as all
things are probable, and the contrary utterly uncertain,
ooliſh a thing is it, to go from the light of a plain Re-
on and Scripture, and argue from our dark uncertainties
ſt the light?" Baxter on the Chriſtian Rel. p. 394.

ceſſively ſpring into exiſtence, the condition of the finally impenitent of our earth may be a warning.*

On the whole, it is not pretended that the above is as clear as a mathematical demonſtration; but neither is it neceſſary. I have ſhewn how it is poſſible to reconcile the creation of thoſe who periſh for ever with the Perfections of God: and, ſince Revelation has not explained the matter, that is ſufficient. In ſome caſes God has not given us the reaſons of His conduct, and then, if we enquire into it, we are neceſſarily involved in difficulties. Job xxxiii. 13. Rom. xi. 33. We may conjecture, and our conjectures may, in ſome inſtances, appear probable; but it is not in our power to arrive at certainty. God did not acquaint Abraham *how* the command to ſacrifice his ſon could be reconciled with the promiſe that through this ſon he ſhould be the father of many nations; (Gen. xvii. 4.) nor could Abraham ſee how the promiſe would be made good: but he did not ſuppoſe the Almighty would be at any loſs upon that head, and therefore he ſtaggered not at the promiſe through unbelief. He knew, if there were no other way, God could raiſe him from the dead. Here we ſee that Abraham was ſo far from diſcerning with certainty how this difficulty would be cleared up, that he ſaw only one way in which it was poſſible, and that did not turn out to be the method which the Almighty adopted. God may have a thouſand reaſons for what He does, and a thouſand different ways of bringing about His purpoſes, which may not be within the ken of mortals. There is nothing wrong however in trying to find out His reaſons and ways of action, provided it be done with humility; but if we pertinaciouſly arraign the wiſdom and power of God when we can proceed no farther, we only diſplay

* "The eternal puniſhment of wicked men and angels may "continue an eternal monument of diſobedience and divine diſ-"pleaſure, perhaps to many other ſyſtems of intelligent agents "created to probation." Cure of Deiſm, Vol. i. p. 325.

iſplay our pride and ignorance. Are we acquainted ith all His works and ways? Can He do nothing hich ſhort-ſighted mortals cannot explain?

If it ſhould be ſaid, that what is advanced reſpecting all the planets being inhabited, and all the other ſpecies of intelligent creatures riſing gradually above us by almoſt imperceptible degrees, is ſupported by very ſlender evidence; or ſhould it even be proved to be impoſſible, (though I am quite confident it cannot,) yet it muſt not be forgotten, that theſe things are not immediately connected with the main argument. The Scriptures inform us, that, beſides men, there are other intelligent beings—that ſome of them ſinned and are ſuffering—that their ſufferings are recorded as a warning to us—that others maintain their integrity—and that we ought to ſtrive to do the will of God on earth as they do in heaven. Thus the moſt material points are proved from the ſacred Scripture: and but few will deny the following inference to be very probable—That God will make the puniſhment of wicked men a warning to others, and thereby prevent a greater evil, which is a ſufficient reaſon for their exiſtence.*

When a doctrine is clearly proved from Scripture, all difficulties ſhould give way to—*Thus ſaith the Lord*; for it is eaſy to aſk queſtions upon a known truth which no man can fully anſwer. But ſuch a mode of diſputing is like caſting duſt into a perſon's eyes: it is

* "Why may not all the miſery in this ſyſtem of ours promote and increaſe the happineſs of ſome others? We have good reaſon to believe that there is ſome connection between the different ſyſtems of the Univerſe, but have ſmall ground to imagine ours the beſt. Why then may it not be ſubſervient to a better? This indeed is only conjecture, however, I think it would be no eaſy matter to confute it, till which be done, we may very ſafely conclude, that the fall itſelf, as well as all the ſin and miſery conſequent upon it, could not have been prevented without greater detriment to the whole." King's Orig. of Evil, p. 471. Law's Note.

is to perplex rather than to elucidate a ſubject: it is inconſiſtent with that reverence which is due to the Divine Authority, and can only ſerve a bad cauſe.

Section VI.

On the Immutability *of* God's Counsels.

Mr. WINCHESTER, after citing Epheſ. i. 8—11 1 Tim. ii. 3, 4, remarks, "If God will have all men "to be ſaved, or reſtored, and to come to the know- "ledge of the truth—if it is his good pleaſure, which "he hath purpoſed in himſelf, in the diſpenſation of "the fulneſs of times, to rehead all things in Chriſt, "both in heaven and on earth—and if he worketh "all things after the counſel of his own will; then "is not the doctrine of the reſtoration true.*

It is allowed that the good pleaſure of God, to gather together, or re-head all things in Chriſt, was not defeated: for we read in ver. 22, that God "*hath* "put all things under His feet, and gave Him to "be the *head* over all things to the church." The *gathering together*, or *re-heading all things in Chriſt*, therefore cannot mean the *reſtoring* all things in Chriſt, becauſe the former hath taken place, but *this* hath not. The Apoſtle was writing "to the *ſaints* "at Epheſus, and to the *faithful* in Chriſt Jeſus," and he informs them of a myſtery of the Divine Will, which was, "in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of "times," or under the goſpel diſpenſation (ſee Gal. iv. 4.) to raiſe Jeſus Chriſt to the head of His moral government,

* Dialogues, p. 101.

nment, and invest Him with full authority over things in heaven and on earth." In ver. 22, postle informs them that that happy event had taken place, and that the Redeemer's authority xercised for the good of *the church*. This would ll of consolation to the *faithful saints;* but what to do with the restoration of wicked men and ? Suppose His Majesty were to resign the go- nent of these kingdoms into the hands of his son, a charge to exercise his authority for the benefit *faithful* subjects; should we not think the man ged in his intellects who should conclude from at every prisoner would be set at liberty, and there would be no more disorder in society?

e will of God, as expressed in 1 Tim. ii. 3, 4. be frustrated. The Universalists believe that re- nce, faith, and obedience are necessary in order vation: and they know very well that the will od respecting our repentance, faith, and obedi- is daily frustrated in innumerable instances. Apostle wrote under the influence of the Holy t, and therefore expressed the will of God, when id, "*I will* that men pray every where, lifting holy hands without wrath and doubting." But en pray *every where?* Do they *every where* lift oly hands? Must we search *every where* in vain wrathful person or a sceptic? Now what an dity is it to pretend that the *end* is certain and lary, when experience proves that the *means* in to it are contingent? The Predestinarians are stent upon this subject: they hold that those who predestinated to eternal life, are necessitated to rm the conditions upon which it is suspended. indeed the connexion between the end and the is is so close, that even a child must perceive the cannot be absolutely determined while the other volved in uncertainty.

A

A great deal of confuſion has ariſen upon this ſubject from not conſidering in what caſes the will of God may be oppoſed with ſucceſs, and in what caſes it cannot. The will of God, ſo far as it is made known to us, is irreſiſtible in every thing, except where the co-operation of the human Will is neceſſary to bring about His purpoſes. God cannot make man virtuous and happy without the concurrence of his Will, and no violence muſt be done to it, for there can be no *Moral Virtue* without *Moral Liberty*. Man may therefore, by continued reſiſtance, defeat the Will of God concerning his ſalvation. The word of God is very expreſs upon this ſubject. "O Jeruſalem, Je-"ruſalem, thou that killeſt the prophets, and ſtoneſt "them which are ſent unto thee, how often *would* "*I* have gathered thy children together as a hen "gathereth her chickens under her wings, and *ye* "*would not*," Matt. xxiii. 37. Here the Will of man and the Will of God are repreſented as oppoſed to each other, and the Will of man as prevailing.

Mr. Vidler on 1 Tim. ii. 3, 4, ſays "It would be, "perhaps, a ſufficient anſwer in the opinion of moſt "perſons only to aſk, Is the Apoſtle ſpeaking here "of a command, or of a purpoſe of the divine "mind?"* I beg leave to aſk, Whether it be not the purpoſe of the Divine Mind that the commandments ſhould be kept? if it be, is not the Divine purpoſe fruſtrated when they are broken? I wiſh to enquire farther, Whether it be the purpoſe of God to ſave any who do not obey His commands? if not, ſince Mr. V. grants that His will reſpecting our obedience may be reſiſted, I ſhall be glad to know how it can be proved that His will reſpecting our ſalvation is irreſiſtible?

To ſhew that the Divine purpoſe cannot be fruſtrated, Mr. V. refers to Iſa. xliii. 13. xlvi. 11. Dan. iv.

* God's Love to his Creatures, p. 24.

iv. 35. Ephſ. i. 11. I have granted that the Will of God is irreſiſtible in every thing except in the virtue and happineſs of His creatures. The above texts do not militate againſt this exception, and therefore do not require any further notice.

Section VII.

On the Extent *and* Efficacy *of the* Death *of* Christ.

CHRIST died for all men. I infer from this propoſition that the ſalvation of all men is *poſſible:* my opponents infer from it that the ſalvation of all men is *certain.* My inference ſuppoſes ſalvation to be *conditional:* theirs ſuppoſes it to be *unconditional.* Does it require a ſcribe well inſtructed in the law to determine this matter? and yet it has been confidently aſſerted, that a conſiſtent Arminian muſt be an Univerſaliſt.

Mr. Weaver writes in the following curious manner on 1 Tim. iv. 10. "By ſaying *the Saviour of all men,* "he includes the whole, both ſaints and ſinners; and "then adding, *eſpecially of them that believe,* he "diſtinguiſhes the righteous from the wicked, by "which diſtinction 'tis plain he meant to include "both. But if Jeſus Chriſt be the Saviour of all "men, and yet is not the Saviour of all men, nor "ever will be, is not this a contradiction in terms?"* I believe with Mr. W. that Jeſus Chriſt "is the Sa-"viour of all men." But the queſtion is, In what ſenſe muſt we underſtand this phraſe? The additional words, *eſpecially of them that believe,* ſhew that He is

* Free Thoughts on the Univerſal Reſtoration, p. 89.

is the Saviour of believers and of unbelievers in two very different ſenſes, which would not be true on the ſuppoſition that all are made finally holy and happy. The obvious meaning of the paſſage is, He is the Saviour of all men *conditionally*, and of believers *fully* and *eternally*. But what has this to do with their doctrine, of the final Reſtoration of all, eſpecially conſidering the diſtinction which they have lately made between *Reſtoration* and *Salvation?*

"It appears from 1 John iii. 8, ſays Mr. Weaver, "that if the works of the devil are not deſtroyed, "the purpoſe of God's Son is not accompliſhed. And "how the works of the devil can be deſtroyed, if "nine tenths of mankind be left to blaſpheme for "ever, I know not."* Guy Fawkes had prepared works for the ruin of the nation: were not his works deſtroyed without his being made prime miniſter? Before it can be concluded from this text, that puniſhment muſt come to an end, it muſt be ſhewn that it is the work of the devil, rather than of Jeſus Chriſt, to puniſh ſinners for their ſins.

Mr. Weaver tacks together John i. 29.—xii. 47, and informs us, that the world whoſe ſins the Lamb of God taketh away, is "that world who *hear his* "*words and believe not.* But how this world is to "be ſaved," ſays he, "if their puniſhment is to be "without end, I muſt confeſs I know not."† Nor I neither. Nor yet do I know of any text of Scripture which ſays that the infidel world *is to be ſaved.* I am ſure neither of the paſſages to which Mr. W. refers ſay any ſuch thing; and I know who hath ſaid, "He that *believeth not* on the Son, *ſhall not ſee* "*life.*"

Mark ii. 10, is next brought forward by this gentleman. "If the birth of Chriſt," he obſerves, "was "to be in fact good tidings of great joy, and that to "all

* *Free* Thoughts, p. 91. † Free Thoughts, ib.

ll people, then all people muſt be benefited by t, but if endleſs miſery be true, &c."* The quality idings then, it ſeems, depends upon the treatment ch they meet with; wicked people may therefore God at the day of Judgment, that they never re- ed one gracious meſſage from Him, for if they had *muſt have been benefited by it*; and they may truly ſay that they never derived any advantage n the tidings which they received from heaven. I e been in the habit of thinking that thoſe tidings rve the denomination of *good* which propoſe any antages to me, whether I avail myſelf of them or

Mr. Weaver aſſumes much importance on Rom. xi. 12, 25, 26, 32, 33. "I would be glad to know," he, "what riches there can be in that ſyſtem which ſhuts up a whole nation in unbelief for many ges together, that he" (God) "might at laſt have ercy on their offspring. Every good man would lefire to be excuſed from ſuch a happineſs as he an receive only at the expenſe of his anceſtors' in- inite miſery."† A man of Mr. W's. pretenſions Greek and Hebrew criticiſm ought to have known the word, *them*, is not in the original. The concluded or locked up in unbelief includes both s and Gentiles.‡ The Gentiles *in times paſt had believed God*, ver. 30, i. e. were not His people profeſſion, this privilege being reſtricted to the s. *Yet ye* (the Gentiles) *have now obtained mercy ough their* (the Jews') *unbelief*: i. e. are called to ofeſſion of the goſpel, and to the enjoyment of its ileges. See Acts xviii. 6,—xxviii. 28, 29. The oſtle goes on—*Even ſo have theſe* (the Jews) *alſo not believed, that through your* (the Gentiles')

mercy

* Free Thoughts, p. 91.
† Free Thoughts, p. 59.
‡ See Coke's Comment on this Text.

mercy, they alſo may obtain mercy, by being provoked to jealouſy. See ver. 11. He then obſerves,—*God hath concluded*, (or ſhut up) *all* (both Jews and Gentiles by turns) *in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.*

From this review of Divine Providence, in calling the Gentiles to be, by profeſſion, the people of God under the goſpel, after the Jews had rejected it;—in his provoking the Jews to jealouſy by their obſerving his mercy to the Gentiles, and in his bringing the nation of the Jews, by this method, to a profeſſion of the goſpel,—the Apoſtle might well exclaim, "O the "depth!" &c. But what is there in this like bringing about the converſion of the Jews, in the latter day, at the expenſe of their anceſtors' infinite miſery? If many of the Jews periſh, it is not to purchaſe the ſalvation of their poſterity, but as a puniſhment for their own unbelief, of which unbelief they themſelves were the authors and not God.

If the Univerſaliſts will have it that this chapter has any thing to do with their doctrine of a reſtoration from hell, they ſhould inform us, how the believing Gentiles can be ſaid to provoke the Jews in hell to jealouſy, and thereby induce them to ſeek ſalvation; for the Apoſtle ſays, "Salvation is come unto "the Gentiles for to provoke them (the Jews,) to "jealouſy." He alſo obſerves of himſelf,—"I am "the Apoſtle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office; "if by any means I may provoke to emulation them "which are my fleſh, and might ſave ſome of them." But I have not yet read of the Apoſtle magnifying his office ſo far as to try to provoke the inhabitants of hell to emulation, that he might ſave *them*. If the Univerſaliſts have found out a method of doing this, it is a pity they have not publiſhed their diſcovery to the world, that others might aſſiſt them in this ſalutary undertaking.

We read of the reſtoration of all Iſrael in Ezek. xxxvii. 21, 24. "I will take the children of Iſrael

" from among the heathen, whither they be gone, " and will gather them on every ſide, and bring them " into their own land. And I will make them one " nation, and one king ſhall be king to them *all*, and " they *all* ſhall have one ſhepherd, &c." The dead cannot be included in this account, becauſe theſe Iſraelites are not repreſented as being taken out of hell, but from among the heathen nations. The political diſtinctions here ſpoken of, will not exiſt after the day of judgment. The increaſe of population mentioned in ver. 26, cannot take place, according to our Lord, after the reſurrection. Now can any man make it appear, that the *all* of the Apoſtle is to be underſtood in a more comprehenſive ſenſe than that of the Prophet? and that they do not both refer to the ſame period?

Mr. Wright remarks on Rom. v. 20, 21, " To " ſuppoſe that ſin will abound and death reign to all " eternity, over millions of creatures, is to ſuppoſe " that grace never will abound equally with ſin; " but the Apoſtle ſaith *much more:* and if grace do " not ultimately reign over all mankind, it cannot " be ſaid that grace ever will reign as ſin hath reign- " ed, for ſin hath reigned over all." * Mr. Wright is miſtaken as to the meaning of the word *ſin* in this paſſage. He ſuppoſes it means all the ſins, of all men, in all ages. But if this were its meaning, the Apoſtle's aſſertion in the next verſes (Chap. vi. 1, 2.) would not be true; for if we continued in ſin grace would abound: and the more ſin we committed there would be the more grace; but the Apoſtle enters a caveat againſt putting any ſuch ſenſe on his words, and ſays, *God forbid:* If ſin in this place is to be underſtood in Mr. W's. comprehenſive ſenſe, even then grace could only abound *as much* as ſin; for how it could abound over *more than all ſin*, I confeſs I have not penetration enough to diſcern; but the Apoſtle ſays *much more*. By ſin in this text, I underſtand

* *Hints* on the Reſtoration, p. 9, 10.

ſtand the ſin of Adam which hath reigned unto death. ver. 12. Grace abounds *as much* as this ſin, by juſtifying us from it as ſoon as we are brought into exiſtence, ver. 18. And it abounds *much more,* by taking away all the perſonal ſins of believers, making them righteous, and conducting them to a glorious immortality. This interpretation is confirmed by ver. 15, 16. Here the *ſin* is called *the offence of one,* and the abounding of grace conſiſts not only in the juſtification of many (all) perſons from the one ſin of Adam, but alſo in the juſtification of all believers from their *many* perſonal *offences.* In this view, the words *much more,* may be underſtood with ſtrict propriety, if the pardon of all the offences committed by millions of believers may be conſidered as a matter of great importance.

Mr. Winchester contends that Heb. ii. 9, ſhould be rendered, according to ſome manuſcripts, *for all except God.** I cannot ſee what would be gained if this were admitted. The Univerſaliſts will reſtrict the word *all* to intelligent beings ; and of theſe they will except the good angels, as they ſtood in no need of a Saviour. And I ſhall take the liberty to leave out the fallen angels, becauſe we are told, ver. 16, that He *taketh not hold* of them. And though He died for all men, yet he bringeth only the *many ſons to glory,* ver. 10. We become the *children* of God by *faith* in Chriſt Jeſus: and He will *profit* thoſe *nothing* who do not believe. Gal. iii. 26.—v. 2—4. This text therefore affords no ſupport to the doctrine of Reſtoration.

"I ground the Reſtoration of all things," ſays Mr. " Winchester, " upon theſe two premiſes, which I " call the *major* and the *minor ;* 1. That *all things* " are given to the *Son,* without exception : 2. That " *all* that are *given him, ſhall come to him,* in ſuch a " maner as *not to be caſt out ;* and that none ſhall be " miſſing,

* Dialogues, p. 40,

" miſſing, loſt or wholly deſtroyed."* I have no controverſy with any man about the major. Mr. W. refers to John vi. 37, 39, in proof of the minor. But theſe verſes relate only to the ſalvation of Believers who *hear and learn* of the Father, not in hell but on earth, ver. 44, 45, and therefore come to Chriſt and are ſaid to be given to him in a peculiar ſenſe. This muſt be evident to every one who attentively, and without prejudice, reads the whole paragraph. I ſhall only quote from ver. 35, " Jeſus ſaid, I am the " bread of life; he that cometh to me ſhall never " hunger; he that believeth on me ſhall never thirſt. " But I ſaid that ye alſo have ſeen me and believe not. " All that the Father giveth me," in a peculiar ſenſe, viz. all that hear and learn of him, ver. 45, " will " come to me," προς με ηξει, that is, will believe in me, " and him that (thus) cometh" by faith, " to me I " will in no wiſe caſt out. For I came down from " heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him " that ſent me. And this is the Father's will who " ſent me, that of all which he hath given me," (viz. all that hear and learn of him, and therefore believe in Chriſt,) " I ſhould loſe nothing, but ſhould " raiſe it up again at the laſt day. And this is the " will of him that ſent me, that every one who ſeeth " the Son and believeth on him, may have everlaſting " life, and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day."

In ſhort, altho' the Father hath given all things into the hands of Chriſt as a Proprietor, and Chriſt will raiſe all men again at the laſt day, and as a Sovereign will reward His faithful, and puniſh His rebellious ſubjects; yet the Father only giveth believers into His hands, as a Saviour, that they may obtain everlaſting life. According in the verſe laſt quoted, the very verſe following that which Mr. W. refers to in proof of the Reſtoration,

* Dialogues, p. 140.

toration, everlaſting life is reſtricted, by the will of God, to *believers*.

It is impoſſible to make common ſenſe of chap. xvii. 2, 6, without admitting this diſtinction. "Thou "haſt given Him power over all fleſh. I have mani- "feſted thy name to the men which thou gaveſt me "out of the world." Here we ſee that *all* are given into the hands of Chriſt, and that ſome are given Him out of theſe, i. e. *out of the world*. Of the former it is ſaid, He hath *power* over them, i. e. to *govern* them. But of the latter it is ſaid, He hath *manifeſted the name of God to them*, i. e. to *ſave* them. We ſee alſo that the gift in this latter ſenſe is not ſo extenſive as in the former; and if it were, the Reſtoration intended could not be inferred from it, for Judas was one of thoſe given to Chriſt out of the world, and yet Judas became a ſon of perdition, and was loſt: ver. 12.

On John xii. 32, Mr. Winchester remarks, "He "was lifted up from the earth, and therefore the IF "is now no more; he will certainly draw all unto "himſelf, and give eternal life, or the knowledge of "God, to all."* But where is the proof that, *to draw all unto Himſelf*, ſignifies, *to give eternal life to all?* In the preceding verſe, with which this is immediately connected, our Lord is ſpeaking about *judgment*, not ſalvation. "Now is the judgment of "this world; now ſhall the prince of this world be "caſt out." He then adds—"And I, if I be lifted "up, &c." The paſſage may be thus paraphraſed, "*Now* is the judgment given concerning Satan's "uſurped authority over this world. As its prince "he *is* judged, (chap. xvi. 11.) and ſhall be caſt out. "And when I have ſuffered upon the croſs, my "Father will exalt me to the head of His moral "government;

* Dialogues, p. 143.

rernment; I will then act in a judicial capa-
y in relation to *men*—I will draw all men unto
tribunal."

e promiſe made to Abraham has often been urged
in favour of the doctrine of Reſtoration.
is," as Mr. Fiſher obſerved, "as it is explain-
by the Apoſtle, Gal. iii. 8—26, is referred to
riſt, and ſuppoſed to receive its accompliſhment
all thoſe who believe the goſpel; and that the
t of mankind are not intereſted in that promiſe,
t remain under the curſe." This is very clear:
d the Scripture foreſeeing that God would juſ-
y the heathen *through faith* preached before the
ſpel unto Abraham, ſaying, In thee ſhall all na-
ns be bleſſed. So then they which be of *faith*
e bleſſed with faithful Abraham. For as many
are of the works of the law are *under the curſe.*
it the Scripture hath concluded all under ſin,
at the promiſe by faith of Jeſus Chriſt might be
ven to them that *believe.*" If the bleſſing be not
reſtricted to believers, and the reſt left under the
, I will give up all pretenſions to common ſenſe.
Vidler however contends that this is not the "full
port of the promiſe." This is only ſaying in
words that unbelievers are not under the curſe.
Paul! what a ſhort ſighted creature thou art not
derſtand the *full import* of the promiſes! "We
ſtinguiſh," ſays Mr. V. "betwixt the commence-
ent, progreſs and conſummation of the prophetic
omiſes of God." Diſtinguiſh as you will you
ot extend the bleſſing to unbelievers without giv-
he lie to the Apoſtle. Mr. V. however makes
ttempt, and we ſhall ſee preſently with what
ſs. "The promiſe made to Abraham that he
ould be the heir of the world, Rom. iv. 13, ul-
nately referred to Chriſt whom the Father hath
ppointed heir of all things, Heb. i. 2. The Apoſtle
plains the phraſes *all nations, all the earth, all*
e *families of the earth, by the* world, and all

" *things.* In Peter's addreſs to the Jews, in Acts iii. " 19—26, he connects the reſtitution of all things " (ver. 21.) with the covenant which God made " with their fathers. Surely to be heir of all things, " muſt ſignify ſomething more than to be heir of " the church, and the *Reſtitution of all things* muſt " mean ſomething more than the ſalvation of the " church."*

Let the promiſe made to Abraham, that he ſhould be heir of the world, refer ultimately to whom it may, it is expreſsly limited to believers. " For the promiſe " that he ſhould be the heir of the world, was not to " Abraham, or to his ſeed, through the law, but " through the righteouſneſs of faith. For if they " which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, " and the promiſe made of none effect. Becauſe the " law worketh wrath, Rom. iv. 13, 14, 15.

" The Apoſtle Peter connects the *Reſtitution of all* " *things* with the covenant which God made with the " fathers. Surely the Reſtitution of all things muſt " mean ſomething more than the ſalvation of the " church." And who ever denied it. But muſt it " ſurely mean" the reſtoration of wicked men and devils out of hell? This is the taſk which Mr. V. undertook; but he has failed in the performance of it. Of theſe " times of *Reſtitution of all things*," the Apoſtle informs us, " God hath ſpoken by the " the mouth of all His holy prophets ſince the world " began." Now can Mr. V. produce any thing out of the writings of *all* the prophets *ſince the world began*, in ſupport of his doctrine of Reſtoration? But I will ſpare him the trouble. Peter immediately mentions one of the prophets who ſpake to the fathers upon this ſubject. " Moſes truly ſaid unto the fa- " thers, A Prophet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up " unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him " ſhall

* God's Love to His creatures. p. 17.

" ſhall ye hear in all things, whatſoever He ſhall ſay " unto you. And it ſhall come to paſs, that every " ſoul which will not hear that Prophet ſhall be de- " ſtroyed from among the people," ver. 22, 23. In theſe times of Reſtitution, then, according to Moſes, it ſhall come to paſs that every unbeliever *ſhall be deſtroyed.* Mr. V. therefore ſpoke very wiſely when he obſerved that the *Reſtitution of all things* muſt mean ſomething more than the ſalvation of the church, for we ſee that it includes in it the *deſtruction*, not the *ſalvation*, of her enemies.

Section VIII.

On Reconciliation *by* Christ, *and his* Intercession.

MR. WINCHESTER makes the following remark upon Colos. i. 15—20. " As the word *all* is gene- " rally acknowledged to be uſed in its moſt extenſive " ſenſe in every place of this paragraph except the " laſt, there is no reaſon to be given why the Apoſtle " ſhould change the ſenſe of the word without giving " us the leaſt notice of it."*

Mr. Vidler alſo is of opinion, that the reconciliation ſpoken of in this paragraph includes devils as well as men. " Let it be obſerved," ſays he, " that all ra- " tional creatures are either things in earth, or things " in heaven ; i. e. things of earthly original, or things " of heavenly original : nothing was made in hell, " even hell itſelf is only the conſequence of the crea- " tures' tranſgreſſion. All the things therefore which " are

* Dialogues, p . 43.

" are in heaven, or which are in earth, muſt mean " every rational creature that needed reconciliation. " That this is the ſenſe of the Apoſtle may be juſtly " urged from ver. 15. It will not be denied that " every man and every angel are here included, as " being created *by* Chriſt, and *for* Chriſt, and having " their exiſtence *in* Chriſt. Paul then goes on to ſay " that Chriſt *is the head of the body, the church*, &c. " Let any man aſk,

" 1. Whether it be not here included that Jeſus " Chriſt made the *Devils;* not indeed as devils, but " as pure and holy angels ?

" 2. Whether Jeſus Chriſt did not make them for " himſelf?

" 3. Whether Jeſus Chriſt doth not now uphold " them in being? For " by him all things con- " ſiſt."

" 4. Let him aſk whether the *all things* in hea- " ven and in earth in ver. 20, which are to be re- " conciled by the blood of his croſs, are not the ſame " *all things* ſaid to be created by Jeſus Chriſt in ver. " 16 ? And if ſo,

" 5. Whether devils are not to be reconciled as " well as men ?" *

I have given their arguments at length on this celebrated paſſage, and ſhall now proceed to anſwer them.

Mr. V. ſuppoſes that by " all things that are in hea- " ven, and that are in earth," the Apoſtle means all things of earthly, and of heavenly original. This curious interpretation of his words is the foundation on which Mr. V's. fabric for the accommodation of devils is built. I will take away the foundation, and then the

* God's love to his creatures, p. 21, 22.

the babel will fall of itſelf. The Apoſtle does not ſay *where they were created,* but *where they exiſted at the time he was writing;* for he writes in the preſent tenſe—" that *are* in heaven, and that *are* in earth;" if therefore he meant to include the fallen angels, and the loſt of mankind, he ought to have added, " and " that are in hell." It is evident that he did not ſubſtitute the preſent tenſe for the paſt, becauſe when ſpeaking of the *time* of creation, in the former part of the verſe, he uſes the paſt tenſe—" By Him *were* " all things created;" and if he meant to ſpeak of the *place* of their exiſtence at that time, he ought to have proceeded, as he begun, in the paſt tenſe, and to have ſaid, " that *were* in heaven and that *were* in earth." This remark ſerves to overturn all that Mr. V. has ſaid; for if things in hell are not included in this account of creation, I believe no one will ſuppoſe that they are included in the reconciliation.

If it be enquired, " What things in heaven ſtood in " need of reconciliation?" I anſwer, that all the ſaints, who were in heaven at the time the Apoſtle wrote, once needed reconciliation: And it was through Jeſus Chriſt, that God reconciled them unto himſelf; for they were ſaved through faith in Chriſt as a *Lamb ſlain* (intentionally) *from the foundation of the world.*

In Heb. chap. ii. the excluſion of devils from the benefits ariſing from the death of Chriſt is expreſſed in very ſtrong terms. " For verily He taketh not " hold of angels," (ver. 16. See the marginal reading.) The reaſon why He aſſumed human nature, is ſtated in ver. 14, 15, 17. " Foraſmuch then as the " children are partakers of fleſh and blood, He alſo " Himſelf took part of the ſame; that through death, " He might deſtroy him that had the power of death; " that is, the devil; and deliver them who through " fear of death were all their life-time ſubject to " bondage. Wherefore in all things it behoved Him

" to be made like unto His brethren ; that He might " be a merciful and faithful High-Prieft in things per- " taining to God, to make reconciliation for the " fins of the people." There are three things remarkable in this paffage. 1. The fallen angels will not be *faved* through the death of Chrift, but *deftroyed*. 2. The children for whom Chrift died, to make reconciliation for their fins, are faid to be partakers of *flefh and blood ;* but the devils are not partakers of flefh and blood ; therefore they are not His children, nor has He made reconciliation for *their fins*. 3. Atonement can only be made in the fame nature which offended. It *behoved Chrift*, to be made *like unto His brethren in all things*, that he might be qualified as their High-Prieft to make reconciliation for their fins. This is the reafon why He took flefh and blood in order to redeem mankind. The devils therefore cannot be benefited by what Chrift did in the human nature, feeing they do not partake of flefh and blood. If they are His brethren, and He intends to make reconciliation for their fins, it behoves Him to be made like unto them in all things ; i. e. it is neceffary He fhould affume their nature. But the Univerfalifts do not contend for their falvation in any other way than by the blood of the crofs ; we may therefore very fafely conclude, that they have neither part nor lot in this matter.

Meffrs. Weaver and Vidler both allow that the *feed of Abraham*, on whom Chrift *taketh hold*, means all believers under the prefent difpenfation ; but thefe they call, the *firft-fruits ;* and Mr. V. wifhes to know, " whether the harveft will not follow ?" i. e. whether unbelievers and devils will not reap everlafting life. The Apoftle James calls the believers of his day, with propriety the firft fruits ; becaufe they were the firft converts under the gofpel difpenfation ; but whether believers eighteen hundred years afterwards ought to be viewed in the fame light may be difputed. How-

ever

as theſe gentlemen expect ſuch a wonderful crop
e time of harveſt, it may be neceſſary to inform
, that our Lord has given a pretty full account
in Matt. xiii. When that ſeaſon arrives, the
s, who are the reapers, will "gather the tares,"
"the children of the wicked one, and caſt
em into a furnace of fire; there ſhall be wailing
d gnaſhing of teeth." So that after the harveſt is
n, many will have to ſay, "The firſt-fruits are
thered, the harveſt is paſt, the ſummer is ended,
d we are not ſaved."

ıe word *all*, in Coloſ. i. 15—20, cannot be un-
ood in ſo comprehenſive a ſenſe when applied to
ıciliation, as when applied to creation; becauſe,
gh Jeſus Chriſt created, He did not die to re-
ile, the *holy* angels. Mr. Vidler ſays, "There
uſt be a reconciliation betwixt them, and ſuch as
e reconciled to God by Jeſus Chriſt."* But it
be obſerved, that God did not give Jeſus Chriſt
e that ſaints and angels might be reconciled *to*
other, but "that He might reconcile all things
to Himſelf." And in this ſenſe, the holy angels
l not require reconciliation.

ıe deſign of God reſpecting the reconciliation of
is in many inſtances fruſtrated. He hath com-
d to His miniſters the word of reconciliation, and
beſeech and pray ſinners to be reconciled to God,
r. v. 19 20. Yet numbers do not receive their
ıony. They may ſtill juſtly complain with the
het, "Who hath believed our report?" And
after the reconciliation hath taken place, final
tion is ſuſpened upon the condition of perſeve-
ɔ; for immediately after the Apoſtle had expreſſed
ɔleaſure of God about the reconciliation of all
things,

* God's love, p. 22.

things, he adds, "And you hath He reconciled in the "body of His flesh through death, to present you "holy, and unblamable, and unreprovable in His "sight; *if ye continue* in the faith, grounded and "settled, and be not *moved away* from the hope of "the gospel." Now if devils are not included in this account of reconciliation, and if the reconciliation and final salvation of men be conditional, then this passage affords no support to the universal Restoration.

On John xvii. 20, 23, Mr. Winchester observes that "when the church shall be one, in spirit, love, "design, judgment, &c. as the Father and Son are; "then shall the *world believe*, and believing have "life; then shall the *world know* Him, whom to "know is life eternal. But as this great *cause* has "never yet existed, the *effect* has not yet followed; "but when the *first* shall be, the *last* shall take place "in consequence." Mr. W. has not left us in the dark about the time when these events will happen. His friend asks, "*When* shall the world believe and "and know that Christ is the sent of God?" Mr. W. answers, "When the great marriage of the Lamb "shall be celebrated, and his Bride shall be one in "universal love and fellowship, as the Father and "the Son now are."* When I had read this, I turned over to Rev. xix. which gives an account of the marriage, to see whether the whore of Babylon was invited to the feast, and made one of the bride-maids; but I found all heaven rejoicing that *He had judged the great whore*, and singing *Alleluia*, because *her smoke rose up for ever and ever!*

SECTION

* Dialogues, p. 96, 97.

Section IX.

On Judgment *by* Jesus Christ.

"ALL puniſhments inflicted by God," ſays Mr. Wright, "are connected with mercy, to him belong-"eth mercy, even when he rendereth to every man "according to his work," Pſa. lxii. 12.* If Mr. W. means that it is an act of mercy to render to every *wicked* man according to his work, how will he reconcile it with what he hath ſaid about "juſtice not "requiring that ſinners ſhould receive according to "their demerits?"† Wherein lies the difference between rendering to every wicked man according to his work, and every ſinner receiving according to his demerits? And yet, it ſeems, one would be an act of mercy, the other an act of injuſtice!

It is granted that puniſhments are connected with mercy, but not that the mercy always extends to the individual ſufferers. God "divided the Red Sea into "parts—and made Iſrael to paſs through the midſt "of it—but overthrew Pharaoh and his hoſt in the "Red Sea: for His mercy endureth for ever." Pſa. "cxxxvi. 13, 14, 15. Mercy is here connected with the overthrow of Pharaoh and his hoſt; but no man in his ſenſes ſuppoſes the mercy extended to the Egyptians. It was a mercy to the Iſraelites to be delivered in this way out of the hands of their enemies. In Pſa. lxii, we find that David, like the Iſraelites above, was ſurrounded with enemies. They imagined miſchief againſt him, ver. 3. They conſulted to caſt him down from his excellency, ver. 4. He had recourſe

* Hints, p. 6. † Examination, p. 86, 87.

courſe to God for defence, and exhorts the ſaints to a ſimilar conduct under ſimilar circumſtances, ver. 5, 8. He then warns the wicked of the ſinfulneſs and vanity of their attempts againſt God's people, ver. 9, 10. And his own confidence, his exhortation to the ſaints, and his warning to the wicked, are all founded upon the next words: "God hath ſpoken once; "twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto "God. Alſo unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: "for thou rendereſt to every man according to his "work," ver. 11, 12. Upon the whole then we learn, that God has *power* to protect His ſaints, and to puniſh their enemies; and that the *mercy* which He keeps for His ſaints will induce Him to exerciſe His power in the way of judgment upon the wicked: He will render to them according to their works, as in the caſe of Pharaoh and his hoſt, and thus deliver His people.

Mr. Wright proceeds, "The future exiſtence of "mankind is the conſequence of the death and reſur- "rection of Chriſt (John xi. 25. 1 Cor. 15, 22. 2 "Tim. i. 10.) but it is acknowledged that the death "and reſurrection of Chriſt are effects of divine love, "conſequently, every thing ariſing from his death and "reſurrection muſt be an effect of love. The Son of "God will judge and puniſh the wicked: conſeqently "his judging and puniſhing them will be mediatorial "acts, intended to bring them into ſubjection, and "reconcile them to God." *

If all the effects of a cauſe are effects of Divine Love, becauſe that cauſe is an effect of that love, it will follow, that, ſince the exiſtence of man, as a free agent, is an effect of the love of God, every thing produced by man as a free agent, is an effect of it alſo, i. e. the ſins of men are effects of the love of God!

Altho'

* Hints, p. 6, 7.

Altho' the death and refurrection of Chriſt are effects of Divine love, this does not hinder but that the benefits, flowing from theſe gracious acts, may be propoſed to mankind upon certain conditions, and that thoſe who do not comply with the terms of the new covenant may be deprived of its bleſſings. His Majeſty inſtead of executing the laws againſt an army of rebels makes proclamation, that all who will lay down their arms and return to their duty within a limited period, ſhall be reſtored to the ſame privileges with his other ſubjects: but that if they do not ceaſe from their unnatural rebellion within the term ſpecified, they ſhall be proceeded againſt as rebels and traitors. Does this gracious proclamation prevent his Majeſty from puniſhing with death thoſe who deſpiſe it? Yet, in Mr. W's. way of drawing conſequences, it is eaſy to prove, that thoſe who continue in rebellion will be dealt with in mercy. Thus "the prolonged exiſtence "of theſe rebels is the effect of His Majeſty's gracious "proclamation. It is acknowledged that His Ma- "jeſty's proclamation is the effect of his love: conſe- "quently every thing ariſing from this proclamation "is an effect of love. His Majeſty will judge and "hang thoſe who obſtinately perſevere in rebellion: "conſequently his judging and hanging them will be "gracious acts, intended to make them good mem- "bers of civil ſociety!" In fact, if we allow Mr. W's. conſequences to be juſt, it may be ſhewn very readily, that when one act of mercy has paſſed, nothing but mercy can follow.

It is ſurely moſt curious language to tell ſinners that it is an act of love and mercy in God to ſend them to hell. Why ſhould they be afraid of going to hell, if there be nothing but the love and mercy of God diſplayed there? Is the contemplation of theſe Divine perfections calculated to inſpire them with fear?

To

To ſhew the tendency of Mr. W's. doctrine, I will ſuppoſe the following converſation to take place between him and a perſon who is in the habit of attending his miniſtry, and of reading his productions from the preſs.

Mr. W. You are far advanced in years Mr. F. what do you think about another world?

Mr. F. I cannot ſay, Sir, that I am prepared for heaven, but it is ſome conſolation to me that the horrible doctrine of everlaſting damnation is not true.

W. Poor conſolation indeed! You cannot tell how ſevere future puniſhment may be, nor how long it may continue. Is it not the height of folly to run the hazard of enduring the moſt extreme tortures for ages, merely to gratify your ſinful inclinations for a few days?

F. If I were conſcious of any ſuch hazard, I would immediately ſubſcribe to the folly of my conduct. But have you not informed the world, that "all puniſhments are connected with mercy?" and alſo that "God cannot act toward any creature, at "any time, but from a principle of love?"* Now will a God of love and mercy inflict puniſhment greater in degree, or of longer duration than is neceſſary to bring His creatures to virtue and happineſs?

W. But for ought we know, extreme puniſhment, for a long time, may be neceſſary to bring about thoſe ends.

F. The direct contrary is clearly deducible from your writings. You know that the above deſcription is calculated to beget fear; whereas you have obſerved, in reply to Dr. Ryland (p. 18.) that "the "government

* Hints, p. 4.

vernment of God is not the reign of terror—that
en are not to be frightened into his love—that if
ey ſaw his lovelineſs, and perceived his love to
em, they certainly would love and obey him." I
ot poſſibly ſee how this repreſentation can accord
any puniſhment; much leſs with puniſhment that
e very ſevere, and of long duration.

. "It is not ſuppoſed by us, that the wicked
ll be conquered and made virtuous by mere tor-
ent, only that their ſufferings may conduce to
eir conviction of the evil and bitter nature of
, in order to their being fitted to become recipi-
ts of divine mercy, by which they will be healed
d reſtored."*

If a conviction of the evil and bitter nature of
e all that is neceſſary in order to become a re-
ıt of Divine mercy, then I may hope to eſcape
ıture puniſhment, ſince, if I die in my preſent
I ſhall go into the other world with this con-
n.

. "As God *doth not afflict willingly*, all the
fferings of the preſent ſtate have a tendency to
ing men to *reflection*, that they may be *humbled*
fore the Lord; and how will it be proved that the
ferings of the wicked hereafter will not have the
ne tendency?"*

An advocate for the tremendous doctrine of end-
ɔrments would object, that you apply that text
ɔ great a latitude, and aſk you how the deſtruc-
ɔf the Sodomites had ſo happy a tendency? with
other puzzling queſtions: but I entirely coincide
your views of the paſſage. You have however
hed me with arguments, in the very next page,
nove all apprehenſions of any thing very dread-
for you obſerve, "That ſufferings in the preſent
"life

* Examination, p. 46. † Ibid. p. 48.

" life have not always a good effect, may be account-
" ed for by conſidering that ſinners do not, generally,
" view them as coming from the hand of God, nor
" conſider ſin as the cauſe of them; no wonder, then,
" that they are not humbled under the Divine hand;
" but they muſt have very different ideas when under
" future puniſhment." You go on to ſay, " that
" men in this life, however great their ſufferings, find
" many alleviations, many things to divert their at-
" tention and diſſipate their thoughts; but none of
" theſe circumſtances can exiſt in the future ſtate of
" puniſhment." Now Sir, if the peculiarity of men's circumſtances here be the reaſon why the ſufferings of this life do not always terminate in converſion, if thoſe hindrances will not exiſt in another world, and if God do not afflict willingly,—then it muſt follow, that greater ſufferings than thoſe of the preſent life will not be neceſſary to bring men to virtue in the life to come, and of courſe will not be inflicted. It would therefore be as abſurd to live in the fear of hell, as to torment myſelf with the thought I am ſubject to bodily affliction and diſeaſe. In ſhort Sir, ſhould I find my ſituation in the other world unpleaſant, I have only to pray for qualifications for a better, and in anſwer to prayer I ſhall obtain both. You will therefore excuſe me if I ſay, that there is nothing in the deciſion of a future judgment of an alarming nature.

Who does not ſee that the jargon of this carnal profeſſor is conſiſtent with the doctrine of Univerſal Reſtitution. The Scriptures uniformly repreſent the day of Judgment as a moſt dreadful ſeaſon to the wicked, from the conſideration that the Divine vengeance will be then diſplayed in its moſt terrific forms; (2 Theſs. i. 8—10.) whereas the Univerſaliſts' account of it is only calculated to harden the lukewarm and careleſs, and to bolſter up the preſumptuous hypocrite. What a dreadful account will ſuch miniſters have to give when they undergo the ſtrict ſcrutiny of their

judge! A doctrine which is unfavourable to the intereſts of morality, by deſtroying a ſanction of the Divine law, has its origin inſcribed upon its forehead in very legible characters.

Mr. Vidler affirms, "That judgment is a mediatorial work and founded upon the mercy of God in "Chriſt."* Let judgment be founded upon what it may, it cannot be a mediatorial work, for that is a contradiction in terms. To judge, is to determine a caſe according to law. To mediate, is to endeavour to reconcile contending parties. It is therefore impoſſible for a perſon to act in both theſe capacities, toward the ſame individual, at the ſame time; while he is mediating he cannot be judging, and while he is judging he cannot be mediating.

The proof that judgment is founded upon mercy is given in theſe words,—"However judgment may be "ſhewn without mercy during the proper age there-"of, yet mercy ſhall finally rejoice againſt judgment." I ſuppoſe Mr. V. wiſhes to be underſtood, that the *ſame perſons* may have judgment without mercy, and afterwards find mercy. It is really aſtoniſhing that a writer, in the ſame paragraph, ſhould venture on ſo palpable an abſurdity: *Judgment is founded on mercy*, and yet *judgment may be ſhewn without mercy!* If Mr. V. can reconcile ſuch contradictions, he is qualified to prove, that darkneſs is light, and light darkneſs. I ſuppoſe he had an eye to James ii. 13. A little attention to the context will convince any unbiaſſed mind that the Apoſtle alludes to two ſorts of perſons. There is a "royal law" which the *ſaints* are under. It is defined in theſe terms,—"Thou ſhalt love thy "neighbour as thy thyſelf." ver. 8. By this law they will be judged: "So ſpeak ye, and ſo do, as "they that ſhall be judged by the law of liberty," ver. 12.

* Dialogues, Note, p. 77.

12. Hence we gather that thoſe who obey this law, by their acts of mercy, will find mercy in judgment, according to Matt. v. 7, "Bleſſed are the merciful, "for they ſhall obtain mercy." But the *wicked*, who have "ſhewed no mercy," ſhall have "judgment "without mercy." This is clear and conſiſtent; but I have yet to learn, how thoſe who have no judgment but what is *in mercy*, can notwithſtanding have judgment *without mercy*.

Section X.

On Subjection *to* Christ.

On Iſa. xlv. 23, Mr. Winchester remarks, "Mind "well, EVERY TONGUE SHALL SWEAR.—Swearing "allegiance, as every civilian will tell you, implies "*pardon*, *reception*, and *protection* on the part of "the king, and a hearty *renouncing of rebellion*, "*true ſubjection*, and *willing obedience* on the part "of the rebels."* Mr. W. has here taken for granted what ought to have been proved, namely, that *to ſwear to Chriſt*, intends *ſwearing allegiance*. The following verſe is inconſiſtent with ſuch an interpretation: "Surely ſhall one ſay, in the Lord have I "righteouſneſs and ſtrength: even to Him ſhall "men come, and all that are incenſed againſt Him "ſhall be aſhamed." If *to ſwear*, in this paſſage, denotes *ſwearing allegiance*; and if ſwearing allegiance, implies "a hearty renouncing of rebellion, &c." then the "all that are *incenſed* againſt Him" will ſwear hypocritically; for no man can willingly obey a ſovereign, againſt whom he is incenſed.

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* Dialogues, p. 21, 22.

The Apoſtle Paul alludes to this paſſage in Rom. xiv. 10, 11, 12. Philip. ii. 9, 10, 11. Inſtead of inferring from it an univerſal reſtoration, he quotes it, in the former paſſage, as proving an univerſal judgment: "We ſhall all ſtand before the judgment ſeat "of Chriſt. For it is written, As I live, ſaith the "Lord, every knee ſhall bow to me, and every "tongue ſhall confeſs to God. So then every one of "us ſhall give account of himſelf to God." Philip. ii. 9, 10, 11, muſt be interpreted as referring to the ſame event, to make the Apoſtle a conſiſtent writer; for if the words, *Unto me every knee ſhall bow, and every tongue ſhall ſwear*, mean, *Every one of us ſhall give account of himſelf to God*, they cannot poſſibly refer to "willing obedience on the part of the rebels."

It is worthy of remark that, for the word *ſwear*, uſed by the Prophet, the Apoſtle ſubſtitutes the word *confeſs*. The confeſſion will conſiſt of two parts, 1. Every one will acknowledge the Lordſhip of Jeſus, or His right to judge: "Every tongue ſhall *confeſs* that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord." No one will preſume to diſpute the authority of the court. 2. Every one ſhall give account of his conduct. "Every tongue ſhall *con-* "*feſs* to God. So then, every one of us ſhall give "account to God." It has been uſual, in courts of judicature to put the parties upon their oath to ſecure the truth of their teſtimony. The Prophet alludes to this cuſtom. He muſt not however be underſtood literally, but merely as ſpeaking with a reference to the *truth* of the confeſſions which men will make before the tribunal of God. No impoſition will be practiſed there! Thus the Prophet and the Apoſtle are reconciled, and the weak ſubterfuge of the Univerſaliſts is cut off.

But this confeſſion, ſays Mr. Winchester, muſt "im- "ply a willing ſubjection to the authority of the "Saviour, brought about by the operation of the

their *deſtruction*, not to their *reſtoration*. See Joſ. x 24—26.

Mr. W. ſeems to lay much ſtreſs upon the words "That God may be all in all." It muſt be remembered however, that it is ſaid Chriſt now "filleth all in "all," Epheſ, i. 23: and again, it is written, "Chriſt "is in all," Coloſ. iii. 11. Both theſe texts are in the preſent tenſe: And if Chriſt be now *all in all*, and yet many are now in miſery, then the ſovereignty may be transferred into the hands of the Father, that He may be *all in all*, and yet many may ſtill remain miſerable.

Rom. viii. 21, 22, is cited to prove *that all things ſhall be ſubdued to Chriſt*; but it ſpeaks of deliverance, not ſubjection. Some have thought that this paſſage relates to deliverance out of hell; but a little reflection will convince any unbiaſſed mind that the Apoſtle refers to the irrational creation. For,

1. He ſays, "The creation was made ſubject to "vanity, *not willingly*." Now the rational creation was made ſubject to vanity, or trouble, willingly; for the ſin of our firſt parents was certainly wilful. If it be objected that their poſterity are ſubjected to trouble *not willingly*, I anſwer, that the Apoſtle, by the word *was*, evidently refers to the period when vanity was firſt introduced into the creation; and it can be true of the irrational creation only that, at that time, it "was made ſubject to vanity not willingly."

2. The Apoſtle obſerves, that "The whole crea- "tion groaneth and travaileth in pain together un- "til now." And what are they groaning and travailing for? To "be delivered from the bondage of "corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children "of God." This is true of the irrational creation. But no one pretends that *the whole* of men and devils *had groaned* and travailed until the Apoſtle's time,

to

to enjoy "the glorious liberty of the children of "God."

3. Rational creatures in this paſſage, are diſtinguiſhed from the creation. "For the earneſt expec- "tation of the *creature* (της κτισεως creation) waiteth "for the manifeſtation of the *ſons of God.* Becauſe "the *creature (creation)* itſelf ſhall be delivered from "the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of "the *children of God.* For we know that the *whole* "*creation* groaneth, and travaileth in pain together "until now: And not only *they*, but *ourſelves* alſo, "which have the firſt-fruits of the Spirit," &c.

4. The time of this deliverance is unfavourable to the reſtoration out of hell. The creation is waiting for, and earneſtly expecting the *manifeſtation* of the ſons of God: when this event ſhall take place, therefore, their ſufferings will terminate. Now the ſons of God will be manifeſted "in that day when I (Jehovah) "make up my jewels. *Then* ſhall ye return and "*diſcern* between the righteous and the wicked; be- "tween him that ſerveth God, and him that ſerveth "Him not," Mal. iii. 17, 18. *The wicked* will be exiſting *then*, as diſtinguiſhed from *the righteous;* which could not be, were an univerſal reſtoration to take place at that time. The groaning of the rational creation is not for the redemption of their ſouls out of hell, but for "the redemption of their bodies," from the grave; which happy event will precede the judgment and puniſhment of the ungodly.

"If it be obſerved," ſays Mr. Vidler, "that "putting under the feet of Chriſt is not expreſſive of "grace, but of wrath, we anſwer, This is an Hebrew "mode of ſpeech, and evidently expreſſive of grace, "for the temple itſelf as typical of the church is "called God's footſtool," 1 Chron. xxviii. 2.* In 1 Cor. xv. 25, to which paſſage Mr. V. I preſume, alludes,

* God's love, p. 27, 28.

alludes, we read, "For He muſt reign, till he hath "put all enemies under His feet." All men being put under the feet of Chriſt is expreſſive of His *authority* over them; but the way in which His authority will be exerciſed, muſt be gathered from their moral characters. The gracious exerciſe of His authority over the church is inferred from the covenant relation in which He ſtands to it, as a *holy* church, and not from the circumſtance of its being under His feet. But in the text under conſideration, the Apoſtle is not ſpeaking of the *church*, but of *enemies;* and it ſurely requires a vaſt ſtretch of imagination to ſuppoſe, that when enemies are under the feet of a victor their ſituation is expreſſive of grace. It is impoſſible to attach ſuch an idea to Joſhua x. 24—26. 1 Sam. xvii. 51. Iſa. lxiii. 3.

Mr. V. proceeds, "If it be ſaid that to be ſubdued "to Chriſt is expreſſive of wrath, we then obſerve, "that whatever method may be uſed to ſubdue ſinners, yet their being ſubdued implies a ſtate of "grace and favour, for we are exhorted to be ſubject "to the Father of ſpirits, and live. And the bodies "of the ſaints will be changed at Chriſt's ſecond "coming, by that power whereby He is able to *ſubdue* all things unto himſelf. And even our Lord, "when he ſhall have ſubdued all things unto himſelf, "will then be *ſubject* to the Father."* The remarks made above contain a ſufficient reply to this paragraph. It is really aſtoniſhing that a ſenſible man ſhould talk at this rate. The ſaints are aſſured that if they continue in a ſtate of ſubjection to the Father they ſhall live; therefore all *conquered enemies* muſt reap life everlaſting! The *bodies* of the *ſaints* will be raiſed by the power of Chriſt; therefore all *ſubdued enemies* muſt be raiſed to glory! *Jeſus Chriſt* will be ſubject to the Father; therefore all *deſtroyed enemies* muſt

* God's love, p. 28.

muſt be reſtored! Who does not feel the force of this cogent reaſoning!

When Mr. V.'s hand was in this work, it is a wonder he did not attempt to prove from Luke x. 17, that the devils are already reſtored. "And the ſeventy "returned again with joy, ſaying, Lord, even the "devils *are ſubject* unto us through thy name." He might have argued thus; The words are in the preſent tenſe; and "we obſerve, that whatever method "may have been uſed to ſubdue them, yet their being "ſubdued, implies a ſtate of grace and favour, for "we are exhorted, &c."

Meſſrs. Wincheſter and Weaver, to ſhew that future ſufferings are intended to ſubdue and purge ſinners, lay conſiderable ſtreſs upon Iſa. xxii. 14. "This iniquity ſhall not be purged from you *till ye die*." When Job affirms, "*Till I die* I will not remove "mine integrity from me," he certainly meant that he would *never* remove his integrity from him; and by parity of reaſon, the prophet meant, that the iniquity ſhould *never* be purged away. Thus we ſee the weapons of our adverſaries are turned againſt themſelves.

Section XI.

Of Sin *in* Hell.

SOME of the advocates for endleſs puniſhment have aſſerted, that the inhabitants of hell will be ſinning continually, by which means the quantity of their guilt will be continually increaſing! the longer, therefore, they remain in hell, the further they will be from ſuffering what their ſins deſerve: their puniſhment,

niſhment, conſequently, muſt be eternal. To this it has been replied, that the Scriptures no where ſpeak of puniſhment for any *deeds* except *thoſe done in the body*, and to attempt to juſtify eternal puniſhment on the ground of ſinning in hell, is to admit that it would be unjuſt, if inflicted, for the crimes committed in this world. This is Mr. Wright's argument. * But Mr. Vidler affirms, "A rational creature cannot be without law, either in heaven, earth, or hell." † If Mr. W.'s ſentiment be adopted by the Univerſaliſts, Mr. V.'s muſt be rejected. For if the inhabitants of hell be under law, they muſt have moral liberty; if they have liberty, the law may be broken: and if the law be broken, the tranſgreſſor ought to ſuffer for it.

The Scriptures repreſent puniſhment as being proportioned to *deeds done in the body*, and are entirely ſilent about laws by which the inhabitants of hell are to regulate their conduct. They may be incapable of *moral obedience* through the loſs of *moral liberty*. That moral liberty may be loſt, through the ſtrength of ſinful habits, I preſume none will deny; and that God is obliged to reſtore it as often as a creature is pleaſed to deſtroy it, I think an inhabitant of hell has ſcarcely temerity enough to aſſert; and to ſay, that the obligation to obey remains after the power to obey is loſt, is to ſay, in other words, that an impoſſibility ought to be done, which is an abſurdity.

"We ſee," ſays Archbiſhop King, "that our "bodies may be maimed for ever, and our limbs "diſlocated and diſtorted to ſuch a degree as to be"come totally incapable of thoſe functions for which "nature deſigned them. Why ſhould we not have "the ſame opinion of the mind, viz. that by depraved "elections, paſſions, and affections, it may be ſo far "diverted

* Examination of Ryland's Sermon, p. 49.
† Wincheſter's Dial. Note, p. 77.

" diverted from the right way of thinking, as to be-
" come equally disabled and unfit for governing its
" actions according to the dictates of right rea-
" son, as a lame man is for a race? If, there-
" fore, God do not interpose his omnipotence, the
" same errors, the same ignorance, the same habit of
" a perverted mind and obstinate propensity to evil,
" which here draws us aside from the right path,
" may continue with us for ever: nor will the soul
" that is immersed in this kind of evil be capable of
" curing itself. For one that is infected with these
" maladies is as unfit to help himself, as one that has
" cut off his hands and feet is unable to run or feed
" himself." *

That moral liberty may be lost, so as never to be regained, is proved from Heb. vi. 4—6. Here is a state of mind described which cannot be improved. *It is* IMPOSSIBLE *to renew them again unto repentance.* This state is illustrated by ver. 7, 8. After land has received the rain of heaven, and the culture of the husbandman, if it produces nothing but thorns and briars, it is *rejected* as a soil incapable of improvement. So men, who have been favoured with the gospel and the labour of the spiritual husbandman in this life, and yet have not brought forth the fruits of the Spirit, are rejected: their END *is to be burned.* Can laws be given to creatures who cannot obey them?

The influence and strength of sinful habits are well described by Mr. Addison. " Those evil spirits," says he, " who, by long custom, have contracted in
" the body habits of lust and sensuality, malice, and
" revenge, an aversion to every thing that is good,
" just, and laudable, are naturally prepared for pain
" and misery. Their torments have already taken
" root in them; they cannot be happy when divest-
" ed of the body, unless we may suppose, that Pro-
" vidence

* Origin of Evil, p. 510, 511.

" vidence will, in a manner, create them
" work a miracle in the rectification of thei
" They may, indeed, taſte a kind of malig
" ſure in thoſe actions to which they are a
" whilſt in this life; but when they are
" moved from all thoſe objects which are h
" gratify them, they will naturally become
" tormentors, and cheriſh in themſelves th
" habits of mind which are called, in ſcript
" *The worm which never dies.* This noti
" is ſo very conformable to the light of n
" it was diſcovered by ſeveral of the m
" heathens *."

It has frequently been objected againſt puniſhment be endleſs, the reign of ſin will alſo. It is a ſufficient anſwer to aſk, Doe reign in that country where all the rogues confined in priſon? But if the Univerſaliſt tend, that ſin will be committed till puniſh ceaſe, I beg leave to inform them, that th princ ple, which, in its conſequences, over ſyſtem. Sin in hell deſerves puniſhment that which is committed in this world. So ſuppoſe a man deſerves fifty years puniſhme ning fifty years in this world, yet ſhould l ing thoſe fifty years of puniſhment, he will niſhment for fifty years longer to expiate and ſo on ad infinitum. But did it ever ent head of any one, that a man is violating t his country while ſuffering in a priſon, in or the pillory for his crimes? On a revi foregoing it appears that the ſinful hab damned are too ſtrong to be eradicated in a ſiſtent with the relations which ſubſiſt betwix rational creatures. They muſt, therefore, ble for ever, ſince, by the Divine conſtitutio ture can be reſtored to happineſs, who is no virtuous.

* Spectator, No. 447.

Section XII.

On the Destruction *of the* Second-Death.

THERE is a famine in the land of promiſe on this article, otherwiſe, I ſuppoſe, Mr. Winchester would not have produced ſuch paſſages as the following to ſupport it: Pſa. lxxxiii. 13—18. Prov. iii. 35. Jer. xx. 11—xxiii. 40. Iſai. xlv. 16, 24*. If theſe texts favour the doctrine of the Reſtoration, I think it may be proved from every verſe in the Bible. It would be inſulting the common ſenſe of my readers to ſpend time in ſhewing that theſe texts are irrelevant to the ſubject.

On Iſa. xxv. 8; Hoſea xiii. 14; 1 Cor. xv. 26, Mr. Winchester obſerves, "The ſecond death is infinitely "more the enemy of man than the firſt, and may "therefore be conſidered as an enemy which God "will deſtroy."† Mr. W. ought to have known that the Apoſtle does not ſay, or mean, every *enemy of man* ſhall be deſtroyed: his words are, "He muſt "reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." The obvious meaning of thoſe words is, Jeſus Chriſt will reign till every *enemy to his government* be conquered. I believe it would be as difficult to prove that the ſecond death is an enemy to the Divine government, as that a priſon, for offenders, is an enemy to human governments. It appears from Matt. xxv. 41, that the ſecond death, which is there called *everlaſting fire*, is *prepared* by the Judge for the puniſhment of the wicked; and it is not very probable that he would prepare an enemy to himſelf.

The

* Dialogues, p. 50. † Ib. p. 61.

The ſting of death is ſin. "While ſin remains in "exiſtence," ſays Mr. W., in the ſame page, "death "will be able to ſhew its ſting; but the time will come "when Death will have no ſting to boaſt of; there- "fore ſin, and conſequently death of every kind "ſhall be deſtroyed." The Apoſtle is not here ſpeak- ing of *death of every kind*, but of one kind only; namely, of that which reigns over the body; as is evident from the preceding verſes: "When this cor- ruptible ſhall have put on incorruption, and this mor- tal ſhall have put on immortality, then ſhall be brought to paſs the ſaying that is written, Death is ſwallowed up in victory? O death! where is thy ſting? O grave! where is thy victory?" It immediately follows, "The ſting of death is ſin." No man can doubt but that by *this corruptible*, and *this mortal*, is meant *the body*. *When* it ſhall be raiſed to incorruption and immortality, *then* this victory over death ſhall be celebrated. But will not the reſurrection precede the day of judgment? and will not ſinners be doomed to ſuffer the ſecond death after the day of judgment? How is it poſſible, then, to include any triumph over the ſecond death in this ſong?

To what wretched ſhifts are men reduced when they are determined to abide by a ſyſtem right or wrong! I was led to this reflection on turning to Mr. Vidler's notion of God's Love, p. 18, 19. This gentleman ſays, "We allow that, in the *firſt* reſurrection, it" (1 Cor. xv. 54, 55.) "will have *part* of its fulfil- "ment, but we are perſuaded that it reaches much "further than the *firſt* reſurrection, or even than "the *general* reſurrection." This is a bold ſtroke; but Mr. V. proceeds to the proof. "The Apoſtle," ſays he, "introduces the doctrine of the reſurrection on "the largeſt poſſible ground, v. 21—23. We underſtand "the reſurrection here in a three-fold progreſſion; "Chriſt as the firſt-fruits, afterwards they are Chriſt's "at his coming, but *every man in his proper rank.*

" Here, then, are two ideas concerning, *univerſality* " and *order*, to which the Apoſtle adds another, ver. " 49, which is conformity to Chriſt in his reſurrection " ſtate. Was it the righteous only who have borne " the image of the firſt man, or have all mankind " borne it? If all mankind, then will all mankind " bear the image of the ſecond man in his reſurrection " ſtate, but in different orders (ranks) and degrees. " Thoſe who believe and obey the goſpel will have " their vile bodies changed into the likeneſs of his " glorious body, immediately on his ſecond coming, " as a ſample of that mighty power by which he is " able (and we think willing) to ſubdue all things un- " to himſelf; but thoſe who believe not, and obey " not the goſpel, will paſs thro' the ſecond death be- " fore they can receive their meaſure of conformity " to Chriſt in his reſurrection ſtate."

Mr. V's comment on ver. 49, is far-fetched indeed. Suppoſe I had written to a few pious friends, and informed them, for their conſolation, that as we have borne the image of Adam, we ſhall alſo bear the image of Jeſus Chriſt: what would be thought of a commentator who ſhould ſay my meaning was, that *believers*, and *unbelievers*, and *damned ſpirits*, ſhould all bear the image of the Lord Jeſus? The Apoſtle, in chap. i. 2, informs us who are included in this pronoun *we*. He wrote to *the Church of God at Corinth*, to them that were *ſanctified in Chriſt Jeſus, called to be ſaints, with all that in every place called upon the name of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, both theirs and ours.*

Mr. V. contends that ſome will have to paſs thro' hell before they attain to conformity to Chriſt, and that they will not have completed this progreſs till long after the general reſurrection; but the Apoſtle ſays, " It" (the body) " is RAISED *in glory. When* " this corruptible ſhall have put on incorruption— " *then* ſhall be brought to paſs the ſaying that is writ-

" ten, Death is ſwallowed up in victory." If this declaration will not be fulfilled till long after the general reſurrection, this corruptible will not have put on incorruption till long after that event; but the Apoſtle ſays again, " It is RAISED *in incorruption.*" We conclude, therefore, that Jeſus Chriſt will ſtand in no need of the fire of hell to purify and burniſh the bodies of thoſe who attain to a glorious immortality. If all, except the few whom Mr. V. calls a *ſample*, have to " paſs thro' the ſecond death before they receive their meaſure of conformity to Chriſt," it muſt be granted that this ſong of victory will not be ſung till many ages after the general reſurrection; but I will ſhew Mr. V. "*a myſtery.* We ſhall not all ſleep, but we ſhall " be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, " at the laſt trump, (for the trumpet ſhall ſound) and " the dead ſhall be raiſed incorruptible, &c." In this myſtery the following particulars are clearly diſcernible:

1. That Chriſt will come (ver. 23) and the trumpet ſound, while ſome of the ſaints are alive upon the earth: for " we ſhall not all ſleep, but we ſhall all be changed."

2. That this change of the bodies of the ſaints, then found alive, will be inſtantaneous. " We ſhall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the laſt trump."

3. That all who have a part in the reſurrection here deſcribed, will be raiſed at the ſame moment. " The trumpet ſhall ſound, and the dead ſhall be raiſed."

4. That THEN, when the trumpet ſhall ſound, and the dead ſhall be raiſed, and the living ſaints changed, and not ſome ages after, as Mr. V. teaches, " ſhall be brought to paſs the ſaying that is written, Death is ſwallowed up in victory."

From

From theſe four incontrovertible truths, I draw the following inferences:

1. That Mr. V.'s *gradual* change, which is to be completed in *hell*, *long after* the general reſurrection, is not the change which the Apoſtle here intends.

2. That as the inſtantaneous change will happen when ſome of the ſaints are upon the earth, it will *precede* the day of judgment.

3. That when this inſtantaneous change takes place, Death will be ſwallowed up in victory, and, therefore, will be deſtroyed *before* the day of judgment. Conſequently,

4. That the *death* which the Apoſtle ſpeaks of cannot be the ſecond death, becauſe ſinners will be doomed to it *after* the day of judgment.

Mr. Wincheſter enquires on Heb. ii. 14, "Now "what death has the devil power over? The death "of the body, or that of the ſoul?"* If any perſon will be at the trouble to read the context, he can be at no loſs for an anſwer. "Foraſmuch, then, as "the children are partakers of fleſh and blood, He "alſo Himſelf likewiſe took part of the ſame; that "through death He might deſtroy him that had the "power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver "them, who through fear of death were all their life-"time ſubject to bondage." I preſume no one ſuppoſes that the word *death*, which occurs three times in this paſſage, is to be underſtood in different ſenſes. I aſk, therefore, What death did Jeſus Chriſt die? Was it not the death of the body? Then it muſt ſurely be the death of the body which the devil has power over. —The lake of fire which the Apoſtle John calls *the ſecond death*, is the proper puniſhment of devils, and was

* Dialogues, p. 62.

was prepared for them, Rev. xxi. 8. Matt.
If they had the power of the ſecond death,
but they would ſoon deſtroy it: Jeſus Chriſt
have died for that purpoſe.

" I am not able to imagine," ſays Mr. Wi
" how St. John's viſion (Rev. v. 13.) could
" if endleſs damnation is true. I ſhould n
" any intimations, far leſs abſolute promi
" God would deſtroy death."* Moſt of the
aliſts urge this viſion as affording demonſtrati
of the Reſtoration. In reply, I obſerve,

1. In this viſion the Apoſtle ſaw " ſuch
the ſea ſinging this ſong. The Univerſaliſts
ledge that the Reſtoration will not precede
ation of the new earth. And in the new e
Apoſtle remarks there will be *no more ſ*
xxi. 1. This chorus muſt therefore be ſung b
creation of the new earth; and ſince the Re
is ſuppoſed to take place at, or after that
viſion cannot be deſcriptive of the great
jubilee.

2. It is a very ſingular circumſtance, th
time the four beaſts, or living creatures, are
before the Lamb ſinging this ſong, they
" golden vials full of odours, which are th
of ſaints." What can the ſaints be praying
the whole univerſe is happy?

3. The Apoſtle has told us when this ſong
" And when He" (the Lamb) " had taken th
(with ſeven ſeals, ſee ver. 1.) " the four liv
" tures and the four and twenty elders fell
" fore the Lamb, having every one of the
" And they ſung a new ſong," &c. ver. 8,
ſong ended previous to the opening of the

* Dialogues, p. 24.

chap. 6, where we find the four living creatures who joined in this ſong, employed in unfolding to John the viſion. Mr. W., and all Writers whom I have conſulted upon this viſion, are agreed, that it is many hundred years ſince the ſeals were opened. If, therefore, their doctrine of Reſtoration can be proved from this viſion, it muſt have taken place near two thouſand years ago.

On Rev. xxi. 4, Mr. Winchester obſerves, "Here "is a ſtate ſpoken of beyond all death; a ſtate where- "in ſorrow, crying, and pain, ſhall be no more. This "ſtate is cotemporary with the new heaven and earth, "after the lake of fire hath ceaſed. Moſt certainly "the word *death* here implies the ſecond death; for we "are informed, in the foregoing chapter, of the firſt "reſurrection. After this, we find, that the dead, "ſmall and great, ſtood before God, and were judg- "ed; and ſuch as were not found written in the "Book of Life, were caſt into the lake of fire, which "is expreſsly called, *the ſecond death*. In this chap- "ter we find that all things are to be made new, and "*death* is to be no more. But this muſt be the ſe- "cond death, for the reſurrection of all the bodies, "both of the juſt and unjuſt, had been ſpoken of "before."*

All that is urged in this paragraph, as proof that, by *death*, in the text, is meant *the ſecond death*, is this: "The reſurrection of all men had been ſpoken of before." Does any man of common ſenſe call this reaſoning? Is it a thing impoſſible for an inſpired writer to ſpeak twice upon the ſame ſubject? There is no difficulty in this to an *uninſpired* writer, for, in the middle of the above paragraph Mr. W., obſerves, "Moſt certainly the word *death* here implies *the ſe-* "*cond death*; for we are informed in the foregoing "chapter of the firſt reſurrection;" and then after a ſhort

* Dialogues, p. 62, 63.

a ſhort digreſſion, he returns to the ſubject again: "But this muſt be the ſecond death, for the reſurrection of all the bodies, both of the juſt and unjuſt, "had been ſpoken of before!"

The following affords preſumptive evidence, that the word *death*, in the verſe under conſideration, does not mean *the ſecond death*. It appears that all which the Apoſtle ſaw from chap. xx. 11, to chap. xxi. 8, inclusive, was one viſion; for the Throne, and the Perſon upon it, are the ſame in both places. In this viſion, the puniſhment of the wicked is twice ſpoken of in the ſame terms, chap. xx. 14, 15.—xxi. 8. In both theſe places *the lake of fire* is explained to be *the ſecond death*. And if John meant the ſame in ver. 4, it is ſtrange that neither the lake of fire, nor the ſecond death, is mentioned, but ſimply *death*. It is alſo worthy of remark, that the revolutions which will take place after the coming of Chriſt on his throne, are particularly ſpecified in the viſion, as the fleeing away of the earth and heaven:—the reſurrection and judgment of the dead:—the caſting of the wicked into the lake of fire:—the creation of the new heaven and the new earth:—and the deſcent of the new Jeruſalem from heaven; but not a word is ſaid about the quenching of the flames of hell, or of the reſtoration of the damned. Was it becauſe that ſingular circumſtance eſcaped the Apoſtles notice? for he was commanded to write what he ſaw in viſion, chap. xxi. 5.—But to proceed to direct proof.

The exemption from death, ſorrow, and crying, promiſed in ver. 4, is the excluſive privilege of the inhabitants of the New Jeruſalem. "And I John ſaw the "holy city, the New Jeruſalem, coming down from "God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for "her huſband. And I heard a great voice out of hea-"ven, ſaying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with "men, and He will dwell with them, and they ſhall "be His people, and God Himſelf ſhall be with them,

"and

" and be their God. And God ſhall wipe away al
" tears from their eyes; and there ſhall be no more
" death," &c. If the word *tabernacle* do not mean the ſame as the *New Jeruſalem*, yet there can be no doubt but that the Tabernacle will be pitched in the New Jeruſalemn. The *men*, therefore, with whom is the Tabernacle of God, muſt be the inhabitants of that glorious city. And it is to them excluſively that the promiſe in ver. 4, belongs: " God ſhall wipe away all tears from *their* eyes; and there ſhall be no more death," &c. The queſtion, therefore is, whether all the human race, and all devils will be citizens of the New Jeruſalem. The Apoſtle has furniſhed us with a ſufficient reply to it. " He that *overcometh*
" ſhall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and
" he ſhall be My ſon. *But* the fearful, and unbe-
" lieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and
" whoremongers, and ſorcerers, and idolaters, and all
" liars, ſhall have *their part* in the lake which burn-
" eth with fire and brimſtone: which is the ſecond
" death." The promiſe, made to ſuch as overcome, that they ſhall *inherit all things*, muſt mean all the bleſſings of the New Jeruſalem ſtate, which our Lord had juſt ſhewn the Apoſtle. The adverſative conjunction BUT, ſhews the connection of ver. 8, with what goes before,—forms a contraſt between the ſtate of believers and unbelievers,—points out, in the moſt ſtriking manner, their difference,—and demonſtrates that tho *fearful*, and *unbelievers*, &c. will not be ſharers with thoſe that *overcome* in the privileges of that happy place.

After a deſcription of the city the Apoſtle returns again to this ſubject; Chap. xxi. 27, " And there
" ſhall in no wiſe enter into it any thing that defileth,
" neither whatſoever worketh abomination or maketh
" a lie: *but* they who are written in the Lamb's Book
" of life." And all men and devils are not written in the Lamb's Book of Life. For " *whoſoever* was
" not

" not found written in the Book of Life, was caſt " into the lake of fire," chap. xx. 15. It is in vain that the Univerſaliſts endeavour to pull them out of the fire, and conduct them to the New Jeruſalem; for the Apoſtle declares, they ſhall *in no wiſe* enter into it. The poor ſubterfuge, therefore, about the reſtored entering into the city *occaſionally* is entirely cut off.

After a further deſcription of the city, the Apoſtle reſumes this ſubject once more: chap. xxii. 14, 15, " Bleſſed are they that do His commandments, that " they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may " enter in thro' the gates into the city. For *without* " are dogs, and ſorcerers, and whoremongers, and " murderers, and idolaters, and whoſoever loveth " and maketh a lie." The ſituation of thoſe *without*, is deſcribed by our Lord in Luke xiii. 25,—28. " When once the Maſter of the houſe is riſen up, " and hath ſhut to the door, and ye begin to ſtand " WITHOUT, and to knock at the door, ſaying, Lord, " Lord, open unto us; and He ſhall anſwer and ſay " unto you, I know you not whence ye are: *Then* " ſhall ye begin to ſay, we have eaten and drunk in " Thy preſence, and Thou haſt taught in our ſtreets. " But He ſhall ſay, I tell you, I know you not " whence ye are; *Depart from* Me, all ye workers " of iniquity. *There ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing* " *of teeth*, when ye ſhall ſee Abraham, and Iſaac, " and Jacob, and all the Prophets in the kingdom of " God, and you yourſelves *thruſt out*." Now if it be ſaid to the men of the New Jeruſalem only, that there ſhall be *no more death*,—if many ſhall ſtand *without* the city, and ſhall *in no wiſe* enter into it,—if thoſe dogs, &c. *without*, ſhall have *their part in the lake of fire*, and will there be *weeping and gnaſhing their teeth*,—and if, at every attempt to enter the city, they ſhall be ordered to *depart*, and be *thruſt out*,—then I hope it is abundantly proved, that this

this vifion is ſo far from affording any ſupport to the Reſtoration-ſcheme, that it fully overthrows it.

As I have ſhewn above that the ſecond death will not be deſtroyed when the *New Heaven* and *New Earth* are created, Mr. Wincheſter muſt be miſtaken in believing, that the earth when on fire will be the lake into which the wicked will be caſt; and that as the earth will be purified by the fire and be made a *New Earth*, ſo devils and ſinful men will be purified by it alſo, and be made new creatures. Mr. W. refers to 2 Pet. iii. 7, in ſupport of his opinion.* It is only neceſſary now to obſerve, that in the parallel caſe, which the Apoſtle introduces in ver. 5, 6, we find that the *bodies* of the antediluvians *periſhed* by the flood, and not that their *ſouls* were *purified;* ſo "the heavens and the earth are reſerved unto fire, againſt the day of judgment, and *Perdition* of ungodly men," not their *Reſtoration*. It appears from this paſſage, as well as from Rev. xx. 9, that the wicked will be devoured by fire juſt before the day of judgment; but this fire will no more be a ſoul-purgatory, than that was which conſumed the inhabitants of Sodom. In fact, we may as well talk about waſhing ſouls white with water, as purifying them by fire.

Section XIII.

On the Experience *of Chriſtians.*

MR. WINCHESTER, in his Third Dialogue, endeavours to ſhew that Chriſtian Experience naturally leads to a belief of the Doctrine of Reſtoration. He aſks his friend, (p. 104.) "Did you not "ſee yourſelf loſt and undone, and that you were "vile before God, unworthy of his mercy, and to-"tally unable to deliver yourſelf from your ſin and "miſery?" His friend replies, "I certainly did."

Perhaps

* Dialogues, p. 10.

Perhaps I am ſhort ſighted, for when I ſaw that I was *loſt and undone*,—that I could not deliver myſelf, —and that I was *unworthy* of the mercy of God, I concluded that as I had no claim on mercy, God might juſtly withhold it for ever.

Mr. W. enquires of his friend again, "And were "you not brought by the power of God to reſign your- "ſelf into his hands without reſerve, to do with you, "and diſpoſe of you, according to his will and plea- "ſure, being convinced that he neither would nor "could do you any injuſtice. O yes," (ſays his friend,) "and then I found peace." According to this experience, it ſeems, that when a man is perſuaded God will do him no injuſtice, he will reſign himſelf into the hands of the Almighty with peace and compoſure. But I aſk, Does not every man, who has juſt views of his condition, ſee that God would do him no injuſtice by ſending him to hell? does he, therefore, feel himſelf reſigned to go thither? Is a conviction that God will do no injuſtice ſufficient to fill the mind with peace? Why then, to be ſure, the inhabitants of hell are full of peace; for they can have nothing to object to the juſtice of God in ſending them thither. I never yet was willing to be damned; I could not be ſatisfied till I received power to reſign myſelf into the hands of God under a perſuaſion of His *mercy* towards me thro' Jeſus Chriſt.

After this reſignation into the hands of juſtice, Mr. W. and his friend both "ſaw into the fulneſs, ſufficiency, and willingneſs of Chriſt to ſave;" and then they were "conſtrained to venture their ſouls into *his arms*." p. 106. And there may they reſt for ever!

But Mr. W. aſks, p. 108, the following queſtions: "Did you not ſee and feel yourſelf the vileſt of ſin- "ners? Did you not view the love of God infinitely "full, free, and unmerited? Did you not behold in "Chriſt an infinite fulneſs, ſufficiency, and willing- "neſs to ſave all without exception? Did you not

love

" love all, and wiſh that all might come and partake " of his grace? Did you not earneſtly deſire the " ſalvation of all your enemies, and of all mankind? " Did you not find it in your heart to pray for the " ſalvation of all mankind as for your own? If you " had as much power as good-will, would you not " bring all to bow to the ſceptre of grace, and to be " reconciled to God through Jeſus Chriſt? Would " you bring all to ſubmit to God and be happy if " you could, and will not he, to whom nothing that " he pleaſes to do is impoſſible, bring all his crea- " tures to be reconciled to himſelf at laſt? He has " infinitely more love to his creatures than all the " ſaints and angels in glory have."

I will take the liberty, in my turn, to aſk a Univerſaliſt a queſtion or two. Would you ſend a perſon to hell for an age, if it were in your power to do or not to do it? Would you not put an end to ſin and miſery immediately, if you poſſibly could? Would you not have prevented the exiſtence of ſin and miſery if you poſſibly could? Tell me now, in Mr. W.'s language, that God, " to whom nothing, that " He pleaſes to do, is impoſſible, has infinitely more " love to His creatures than all the ſaints and angels " in glory have," and then ſay, whether theſe queſtions do not argue as truly againſt an age of miſery, or even againſt its introduction, as Mr. W.'s queſtions do againſt its endleſs continuance?

But the fact is, the queſtions prove juſt nothing in either caſe; for ſince creatures do not ſtand in the ſame relations to each other that they ſtand in to God, they muſt not preſume to transfer their feelings to Him, and then make them the teſt of his procedure in the government of the Univerſe. In all theſe queſtions not a hint is dropped about man being a *Free Agent*, and God a *Moral Governor*, for ſuch a repreſentation would have prevented that influence on the paſſions which they ſeem deſigned to occaſion. Sin flows from

an abuſe of liberty, and puniſhment is inflicted with a view to prevent that abuſe in others, and thereby to preſerve moral order. When a man is brought to the gallows for murder, you may meet with rogues and aſſaſſins, who would ſet him at liberty if they poſſibly could; but does it follow from hence, that the execution of ſuch a man is an act of injuſtice?

Section XIV.

On the Duty *of Chriſtians.*

"1. OUR Lord has commanded us to love all mankind, even our greateſt enemies. But if God doth "not love all himſelf, Chriſt hath commanded us to "be *more perfect*, in that reſpect, than our Father, "who is in heaven."* We are commanded to love our brethren, our neighbours, and our enemies; but thouſands of Chriſtians do this, without falling in love with devils and damned ſpirits.

"2. We are commanded to *do good to all men*, "as we have opportunity."† True. But what *opportunity* have we of doing good to the inhabitants of hell? If the Univerſaliſts will ſhew us in what way it is in our power to ſerve them, we ſhall feel no objection to afford them all poſſible aſſiſtance; but it ought to be kept in mind, that the Scriptures do not repreſent them as objects of mercy, but as monuments of wrath.

But it is remarked further, that we are commanded to *overcome evil with good.* Rom. xii. 21. And it is aſked, Will not God then overcome evil with good? And if he do, Is not the Reſtoration-Scheme true?‡ I aſk

* Dialogues, p. 109.
† Ibid. p. 110.
‡ Univerſaliſts' Miſcellany, Vol. 1. p. 312

aſk, Can we always *overcome evil with good?* We can only ENDEAVOUR to do it, but muſt ſtill leave men at their liberty, as God alſo does; for though the *goodneſs of God leadeth to repentance*, yet ſome *deſpiſe the riches of His goodneſs, and treaſure up unto themſelves wrath againſt the day of wrath*, Rom. ii. 4, 5. And in the very paſſage in which we are commanded to *overcome evil with good*, the reaſon aſſigned is, not that God always overcomes evil in this way, but, becauſe *It is written*, VENGEANCE IS MINE; I WILL REPAY, SAITH THE LORD.

"3. We are commanded to forgive all men their "treſpaſſes, and to pray, ſaying, 'Forgive us our "debts, as we forgive our debtors,' Matt. vi. 12—15. "Now, is it poſſible to ſuppoſe that our Lord would "command us, upon pain of his higheſt diſpleaſure, "to forgive thoſe whom he hated, and determined to "puniſh while he ſhould exiſt, without having the "leaſt deſire or deſign to do them good?"* God does not ſtand in the ſame relation to men, that one man ſtands in to another. And according to the difference of relations, the conduct muſt be different. Hence we may admit the premiſes, and yet deny the concluſion. A *parent* who hazards his life to *ſave* his *child*, only acts a part which becomes him, conſidering the relation in which he ſtands to it. But view the ſame man as a *ſoldier* in the field, and the caſe is altered. It is now his duty to expoſe his life to *deſtroy* the *enemy* of his country.—If God will forgive every offender, why has he annexed penal ſanctions to his laws? or rather, why has he publiſhed any laws? If it may be inferred from the duty of forgiving injuries being enjoined us that God will forgive all men; it will follow, that as we are required to forgive them *in this life*, God will forgive them in this life alſo; and then there will be no future puniſhment at all.

I cannot

* Dialogues p. 110.

I cannot think that the precept to *forgive*, is to be underſtood in that abſolute ſenſe for which the Univerſaliſts contend; ſince God has inſtituted the office of civil magiſtracy, to be a terror to evil-doers. Now if the precept to forgive injuries implied, that we ought not, in any caſe, to ſeek redreſs by law, for what end did God ordain the civil powers? Rom. xiii. 1. But if our forgiving others implies no more than that we ought to be of a merciful diſpoſition, and not to revenge injuries without applying to lawful authority, nor make ſuch application with any other view than a regard to the intereſts of ſociety, then this command can never be urged in ſupport of the doctrine of Reſtoration, becauſe we have reaſon to believe that God has a regard to the intereſts of his creatures, conſidered as a whole, in puniſhing the wicked with endleſs miſery.—The fact is, that repentance in the offender is neceſſary to entitle him to a pardon. "If thy brother treſpaſs againſt thee, rebuke "him; and if he *repent*, forgive him." Repentance is as neceſſary a condition to entitle us to the favour of God: "Except ye *repent*, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh." But if ſome may be ſo far loſt to virtue that *it is impoſſible to renew them again unto repentance*, (Heb. vi. 4—6.) then ſome will never be forgiven. And indeed we are expreſsly told that the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, *hath never forgiveneſs—ſhall not be forgiven.*

"4. We are commanded to pray for all men, 1 Tim. "ii. 1—8.* Obſerve, the apoſtle recommends prayer "for all men: and wills that men ſhould pray every "where at all times, and in all places, lifting up holy hands

* If what Mr. Wright ſays be true, namely, "That God can-"not act towards any creature, at any time, but from a principle, "of love," I cannot ſee what end can be anſwered by our praying for *other people*, or even for *ourſelves*. If God be neceſſarily impelled to acts of love, what neceſſity for prayer? We might as well pray to Him to be omnipotent, immutable, omnipreſent, omniſcient, &c. as to be gracious unto us.

" hands, without *wrath* and *doubting*. O what a " word is this! May we, ought we, to pray for the " ſalvation of all men without *doubting*? Surely " God would never have commanded us to do this, " unleſs it was his purpoſe to reſtore all men in his " own time."*

Mr. Fiſher has given an anſwer to this argument. " As the will of God," ſays he, " is the alleged rea- " ſon why we are to pray for all; if the devils alſo " will be ſaved, the ſame reaſon will equally apply " to them alſo, and by a parity of argument, prayers, " ſupplications, and giving of thanks, ſhould be made " for the prince of devils and all his infernal aſſoci- " ates. But we have not heard whether the advo- " cates for Univerſal Reſtoration are perfectly con- " ſiſtent in this matter."

This brought from Mr. Vidler an avowal, that they do not pray for *devils*, nor for thoſe *men* who have ſinned the ſin unto death. Now is it not very ſingu- lar, after this, to hear him ſaying, " And upon the " common parentage of Deity, and proof of it by " the gift of Chriſt, he founds his proof of God's de- " determined good-will to all men, in that he will " have all men to be ſaved, by coming to the know- " ledge of the truth; and upon the whole of this he " gives the precept to pray for all, as before noted, " and confirms it again, ver. 8, 'I will therefore that " men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, " without wrath and doubting?"†

I wiſh Mr. V. and his friends to obſerve, that the Apoſtle does not ſay, 'I will that a few Univerſaliſts pray in faith for the ſalvation of all the world;' but, " I will that men pray every where, lifting up holy " hands, without wrath and doubting." Now to come

* Dialogues, p. 110—112.
† God's Love, p. 22.

come to matter of fact; Do men pray *every where* in *faith?* Do men *every where* lift up *holy hands?* Any perſon of the leaſt obſervation knows they do not. The natural inference is, that the will of God, upon this ſubject, as expreſſed by the Apoſtle, is in thouſands of inſtances awfully reſiſted. But if the will of God reſpecting the devotion and holineſs of all men may be effectually reſiſted, then his will reſpecting their ſalvation may be effectually reſiſted alſo; for no man can be ſaved without perſonal prayer and holineſs.

But if it be ſtill inſiſted on, that one man ought to pray in faith for the ſalvation of another, and that God is determined to ſave all men, I wiſh the Univerſaliſts to anſwer me a few queſtions. Will God ſave all men whether we pray in faith for their ſalvation or not? Or are believers *neceſſarily* led to pray in faith for the ſalvation of all men? If it be the duty of believers to pray in faith for the ſalvation of all men, would it not be beſt to exerciſe that faith for them while they are in this world, and ſo prevent their going to hell at all? But if ſome men are now in hell, and the Univerſaliſts are praying for the ſalvation of *all men*, are they not, like the Papiſts, praying for the dead? If the Univerſaliſts do not pray for the damned, how can their reſtoration be inferred from this paſſage? It will not, ſurely, be aſking too much, to requeſt theſe gentlemen to be very explicit when they write again upon this ſubject.

Ver. 1, 2, the apoſtle exhorts to prayer for all men, for kings and all in authority, not that all may be ſaved, as the Univerſaliſts pretend, but "that we "may lead a quiet and peaceable life." He proceeds to remark, that God is willing all men ſhould be ſaved, having provided a Saviour for them. He then commands "that men pray every where, lifting up "holy hands, without wrath and doubting." The obvious meaning is, that, ſince God is willing to ſave

every

every man, every man ought to pray in ſincerity and faith for his *own* ſalvation.—The Jews, believing that the favour of God was confined to themſelves, could not bear that the goſpel ſhould be preached to the Gentiles. On the other hand, when the Gentiles ſaw the enormity of their lives, and conſidered that hitherto the Jews had been dealt with as a peculiar people, and that the Jews called them *dogs*, &c. it is not ſurpriſing that they ſhould doubt of their being admitted to the privileges of the Chriſtian Religion, in common with the Jews. The Apoſtle aſſerts, that Chriſt gave Himſelf a ranſom for *all*, and infers from it, that the Jews ought to pray for the Gentiles, without wrath againſt them, and that the Gentiles ought to pray for Salvation without *doubting* the willingneſs of God to give it. But what has all this to do with the doctrine of Univerſal Reſtoration?

Having ſhewn that the Chriſtian's duty affords no ſupport to the reſtoration contended for by our opponents, I will now proceed to ſhew that their doctrine has a pernicious influence upon the Chriſtian's duty, in ſome important particulars.

I. On our Love to God. This will be in proportion to the quantum of miſery from which we *believe* we are ſaved. Our Lord has laid it down as an incontrovertible truth that, "To whom little is forgiven, the "ſame loveth little." Of courſe a man, who is ſaved from ſins which he believes deſerved only limited puniſhment, will not love God ſo much as a man, who is ſaved from ſins which he believes deſerved endleſs puniſhment.

2. On our Obedience. "This is" (the effect of) "the love of God that we keep his commandments." But we have ſeen above, that the Reſtoration-ſcheme will not inſpire us with ſo ſtrong an affection for God as the belief of having merited endleſs miſery; it will not therefore inſpire us with that zeal in the practice of piety and virtue.

3. On our Zeal for the ſalvation of ſinners. This will be regulated by our views of their future condition. No man will be ſo anxious to preſerve his friend from the bite of a fly, as from the ſting of a ſcorpion. I once heard a Univerſaliſt miniſter tell his congregation, that one uſe of his doctrine to the ſaints was, it tended to relieve the mind of that extreme anxiety, which is occaſioned by the thought of our friends being loſt for ever. He informed us that when he believed the doctrine of endleſs puniſhment, his mind was ſo affected with it that, through exceſs of grief, his body was worn nearly to a ſkeleton; but he aſſured us that the Reſtoration-ſcheme had afforded him conſiderable relief, and indeed few of his hearers, I believe, felt themſelves diſpoſed to diſpute it, ſince he then looked as fat and jolly as a King's Beef-Eater. This uſe of the doctrine, and of courſe the doctrine itſelf, appears to have been unknown to God's ancient ſaints. Inſtead of loſing all concern about the ſalvation of ſinners, they ſighed and mourned over them day and night. Pſa. cxix. 136. Jer. ix. 1. Ezek. ix. 4.

The influence of the Reſtoration-ſyſtem on hardened ſinners, has been conſidered under Sect. IX.

On the whole, ſince it cannot be ſhewn that the belief of this doctrine is calculated to improve a ſingle virtue, and ſince it has been proved to have a pernicious influence, in many reſpects, on both ſaints and ſinners, it may be preſumed that it is deſtitute of Divine authority.

SECTION

Section XV.

On the Intermediate *State.*

THE Univerſaliſts are agreed that 1 Pet. iii. 18, 19, relates to Chriſt's preaching to ſpirits in the intermediate ſtate; but they differ as to the *time* when He made them this gracious viſit. Mr. Winchester thinks that "the ſoul of Chriſt, in its diſembodied ſtate," went and preached to the ſpirits in priſon.* Mr. Weaver, who wrote ſince Mr. Winchester, ſays, that "Jeſus Chriſt, *after his reſurrection*, went and "preached to the ſpirits in priſon."† The reaſon of this change is ſufficiently obvious to thoſe who have ſtudied this controverſy. Chriſt's local deſcent into hell cannot be proved from this paſſage on any other ſuppoſition, than that the Apoſtle is here relating events *in the order of time* in which they happened: for if this be not inſiſted upon, the *time* of our Lord's preaching muſt be collected from circumſtances; and we find from Gen. vi, that the Spirit of God ſtrove with them, or by Noah preached to them, while the Ark was preparing. To cut off the force of this reply, it has been aſſerted, that the Apoſtle regarded the order of time in relating the events. Now in this order, 1. He was "put to death in the fleſh." 2. He was "quickened," or raiſed, "by the "Spirit." 3. "He went and preached unto the "ſpirits in priſon." Hence his viſit to hell has been ſuppoſed to have been made ſince His reſurrection. It is not pretended, however, that the Sacred Writers always regarded the order of time in relating events, and till proof be given that that *was* the caſe in this inſtance, I proceed to obſerve,

1. The

* Dialogues, p. 66. † Endleſs Miſery Overthrown, p. 29.

1. The Apoſtle is not here ſpeaking of the human ſpirit of Chriſt, but of the Divine Spirit.* The ſame Spirit that raiſed Chriſt from the dead, preached to the ſpirits in priſon: "Being put to death in the fleſh "but quickened by the Spirit, *by which* alſo he went "and preached," &c. But the Divine Spirit raiſed Chriſt from the dead. See Rom. viii. 11. Heb. xiii. 20. The pretence, therefore, of Chriſt's local deſcent into hell, derives no ſupport from this paſſage.

2. Chriſt never did, nor ever will deſcend locally into hell. I believe no one ſuppoſes He went there prior to his death.—He did not go there in His diſembodied ſtate. For he promiſed the penitent thief, "*To-day* thou ſhalt be with me in paradiſe;" and in His laſt Addreſs to His Father, He ſaid, "Into thy hands I commend my ſpirit." If His ſoul went into paradiſe—into the hands of His Father—it did not deſcend into hell.—He did not preach to diſembodied ſpirits between His reſurrection and aſcenſion. The forty days which intervened between theſe events, were taken up in giving the diſciples more full inſtructions reſpecting the Chriſtian diſpenſation. Acts i. 3.

I do

* Biſhop Pearſon remarks upon this text,—"Thoſe words "of St. Peter have no ſuch power of probation; except we "were certain that the Spirit there ſpoken of was the ſoul of "Chriſt, and that the time intended for that preaching was "after his death, and before his reſurrection. Whereas, if it "were ſo interpreted, the difficulties are ſo many, that they "ſtaggered St. Auguſtine, and cauſed him at laſt to think that "theſe words of St. Peter belonged not unto the doctrine of "Chriſt's deſcending into hell. But, indeed, the Spirit by which "he is ſaid to preach was not the ſoul of Chriſt, but that Spirit "by which he was *quickened*; as appeareth by the coherence of "the words, *being put to death in the fleſh, but quickened by "the Spirit, by which alſo he went and preached unto the ſpi-"rits in priſon.* Now that Spirit by which Chriſt was quick-"ened, is that by which he was raiſed from the dead, that is, "the power of his divinity as St. Paul expreſſeth it, Though he "was crucified through weakneſs, yet he liveth by the power of "God: in reſpect of which he preached to thoſe which were "diſobenient, in the days of Noah, as we have already ſhewn." Pearſon on the Creed, p. 253. 2nd Edit.

I do not know of any one who pleads for his deſcent into hell after His aſcenſion to the right-hand of God: He there "ever liveth to make interceſſion for "us."

3. The mercy of God towards the antediluvians terminated with their exiſtence in this world. They "were diſobedient, when *once* the long-ſuffering of God waited." But when was this ſeaſon of mercy? "In the days of Noah." How long did it laſt? "While the Ark was preparing," ver. 20. How abſurd then is it to talk about the goſpel being preached to a people, after the long-ſuffering of God, in relation to them, had ceaſed?

4. Suppoſe we were to allow that Jeſus Chriſt ſpent two or three days in hell in preaching to the antediluvians, what muſt we infer therefrom? That they were converted, when we know that by his Spirit in Noah He preached to them an hundred and twenty years in vain? And muſt we infer that the Goſpel is preached to *all* ſinners in the intermediate ſtate becauſe it was preached to *them?* and that *all* ſinners will be reſtored, altho' we cannot be certain that one of the antediluvians was?

It is far from being clear that the phraſe, *ſpirits in priſon*, denotes, *diſembodied ſpirits in hell.* When Jeſus Chriſt preached the goſpel to ſinners on earth, He uſed ſimilar language,—He proclaimed "liberty to the *captives*, and the opening of the *priſon* to them that are bound," Iſa. lxi. 1. Luke iv. 18. The Antediluvians, while in the body, might be termed *ſpirits in priſon*, not only as they were ſlaves to corruption, but alſo becauſe they were ſhut up in the world, as in a priſon, under the ſentence of deſtruction, till the day of execution. But the preceding obſervations are not affected either by the adoption, or rejection of this interpretation.

Mr. Winchester ſpends ſome time in proving that by the *dead in Pet.* iv. 6, is not "intended thoſe "that

" that are *ſpiritually* dead only, but thoſe whoſe " bodies are dead."* This is granted, but it does not follow, that the goſpel is preached in the intermediate ſtate. The Apoſtle's words are, " For this " cauſe was the goſpel preached alſo to them that are " dead." Obſerve, the Apoſtle does not ſay IS, but WAS. The goſpel *was* preached to Abraham and the Patriarchs, to Cornelius and his houſehold who *are* all dead, Gal. iii. 8. Acts x. No man infers from this that the Goſpel *is* preached to them in their diſembodied ſtate. But for what cauſe was the Goſpel preached to them that are dead? " That they " might not be judged according to men in the fleſh, " but live according to God in the ſpirit." In the preceding verſe the Apoſtle ſpeaks of Chriſt judging the *quick* and *dead;* and the *quick*, as diſtinguiſhed from the *dead*, may be here meant by *men in the fleſh*. Now the quick, or *men in the fleſh*, cannot be judged in any other way than *according to the deeds done in the body*; and ſince the dead will be judged in the ſame manner, they muſt, like thoſe that are living at Chriſt's coming, have heard the goſpel while in the body. If the Goſpel be preached to ſome men's ſpirits in the intermediate ſtate, ſuch perſons muſt be judged according to, or as men in the *ſpirit*, and not according to, or as men in the *fleſh*.

A ſimilar mode of expreſſion occurs in Ruth i. 8, " And Naomi ſaid unto her two daughters-in-law, " Go, return each to her mother's houſe: the Lord " deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the " dead, and with me." By reading the context no doubt can remain but that by *the dead* here, is meant *the two ſons of Naomi;* and the kindneſs of her daughters-in-law to them, cannot ſurely refer to them when dead, but while they were living; for in what way was it poſſible to ſerve them after they were laid in the grave?

The

* Dialogues, p. 67.

The words of the Apoſtle may be thus paraphraſed, "*For this cauſe was the Goſpel preached to them* in "this world *that are* now *dead, that they might be* "*judged according to,* or as the *men* will be judged, "who will be *in the fleſh* at Chriſt's coming to judg- "ment, and that they might *live according to God,* "in holineſs and happineſs, *in the ſpirit,* during the "period which ſhall intervene betwixt death and "judgment." With this interpretation agrees the context. The Apoſtle exhorts that we "no longer "ſhould live the reſt of our time in the fleſh to the "luſts of men, but to the will of God;" and again reminds us, that "the end of all things is at hand: "Be ye, therefore, ſober, and watch unto prayer." But if the goſpel be preached in the intermediate ſtate, the end of all things is *not* at hand, we may "live "the reſt of our time in the fleſh, according to the luſts "of men," and yet have plenty of time in hell to learn to be ſober, to watch and to pray. Whereas the words are very forcible, on the ſuppoſition that all means of ſalvation terminate with the preſent life.*

It

*Dr. Doddridge's paraphraſe on this difficult text is as follows: "It was *to this purpoſe that the goſpel was preached alſo to the* diſſolute Gentiles, who might truly be ſaid to be *dead* in treſpaſſes and ſins, *that they might be judged according to men in the fleſh;* that they might be brought to ſuch a ſtate of life as their carnal neighbours would look upon as a kind of condemnation and death; *but might live according to God in the ſpirit,* might be brought to a truly ſpiritual and divine life: and if, when men hear the Goſpel, they will not receive and improve it for this important purpoſe, they muſt expect to render to God an impartial and ſevere account for their abuſe of it, and muſt ſtand by all the terrible conſequences of their folly." And the Doctor obſerves in a note, "This interpretation, which is preferred by Brennius and Dr. Whitby, appeared to me, on a full examination, moſt probable; tho' the text muſt be confeſſed to be extremely difficult. Some have thought the Apoſtle refers to thoſe who then ſuffered *martyrdom* for Chriſtianity, as if he had ſaid, 'It was *goſpel* indeed, *good tidings,* even to thoſe that died for it; for tho' men condemned

It is well known that many of the Univerſaliſts hold the doctrine of *the ſleep of the ſoul:* this ſentiment is perfectly inconſiſtent with the Goſpel being preached in the intermediate ſtate: they might as well contend, that the Goſpel is preached to ſtocks and ſtones, as to ſouls in a ſtate of unconſciouſneſs.

But what Goſpel is it which is preached in another world? is it the ſame which is preached to us in this world, or do we look for another? If it be the ſame, it is addreſſed to free agents, its bleſſings are ſuſpended upon certain conditions, and a failure in the performance of thoſe conditions involves a very high degree of guilt, which merits proportionate puniſhment. If, therefore, we grant that the Goſpel is preached in the intermediate ſtate, the Scheme of Univerſal Reſtoration is not helped by it, unleſs it can be proved, that every devil and every wicked ſpirit will improve the day of his viſitation; but this is impoſſible. The probability reſpecting *men*, is on the other ſide of the queſtion. They are more depraved when they leave this world than they were when they came into it; there is, therefore, no likelihood that the ſame means which are ineffectual to their recovery here, will be quite ſufficient for that purpoſe hereafter. It is certainly the deſign of the goſpel to lead men to piety and righteouſneſs in order to their happineſs. But is hell a ſituation favourable to the practice of theſe

condemned their bodies, yet the ſalvation of their ſouls, which is of infinitely greater importance, has been ſecured by it'." This laſt mentioned expoſition of the words ſeems to be peculiarly worthy of attention. The Goſpel was preached to thoſe that were dead, when the Apoſtle wrote, but were alive on earth when it was preached to them, *that they might be judged* or condemned, *with reſpect* (κατα) *to men, in the fleſh*, that is, that they might be judged, or condemned and put to death in the fleſh, by their perſecutors as Chriſt had been, and might thus be conformed to him in his ſufferings, *but*, even after they were condemned and put to death, *might live according*, or with reſpect, *to God in the Spirit*.

theſe virtues? What ſaints will be found there to ſtimulate the inhabitants by precept and example to the diſcharge of theſe duties?—In ſhort, what room is there for virtue in hell? Muſt ſobriety be conſidered as a virtue, where there is not ſo much as a ſingle drop of water? Is honeſty a virtue where there is no property—no opportunity of cheating, defrauding, or ſtealing? Can the inhabitants of hell feed the hungry, clothe the naked, be fathers to the fatherleſs, and make the widow's heart to dance for joy? And if they be incapable of practiſing the duties of Chriſtianity, what claim can they have to its privileges?

The parable of the talents (Math. xxv.) teaches, that the preſent life is the only day of probation. I believe it is not diſputed, that the time when the Lord cometh and reckoneth with His ſervants, (ver. 19.) is the day of judgment. "He then finds one of the three," ſays Mr. Horbery, "who, inſtead of trading with his talent, had hid it in the earth: that is, in the moral "and application of the parable, had not made that "uſe of his probationary ſtate, and of the ſeveral "powers, opportunities, and capacities (the ſum of "all which is repreſented by the talent,) anſwerable "and correſpondent thereto, which he ought to have "done. How now does his Lord decide in this "affair? Does he, on this *fair occaſion*, give the "moſt diſtant hint that he will bear any longer with "him, that he will *try him once more*; or, becauſe "he has failed here, remove him to ſome more advantageous ſituation, where he may ſtand a better "chance for improvement? Directly the contrary; "he takes the talent entirely from him; that is, the "*whole ſum* of his powers as a moral and free agent; "and caſts him into a place, agreeable to this ſtate of "moral inactivity, without light, or liberty; without "motive, inducement, or example to grow better."*

"The

*Enquiry into the Scriptural Doctrine of future puniſhment, p. 46.

" The inſtrumental cauſe of ſalvation," ſays Lampe, " is the preaching of the Goſpel. But the word of " Jehovah is reſtricted unto a ſpecific day, *To-day;* " which once elapſed, the contemners of his word " ſhall not enter into his reſt, Pſa. xcv. 7, 11, compared with Heb. iii. 7, 'For he is our God, and " we are the people of his paſture, and the ſheep " of his hand: To-day, if ye will hear his voice—Unto " whom I ſware in my wrath, that they ſhould not " enter into my reſt—Wherefore, as the Holy Ghoſt " ſaith, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not " your hearts as in the provocation:—So I ſware in " my wrath, they ſhall not enter into my reſt.' But " preachers are neceſſary in order to the preaching of " the Goſpel. We are not, however, informed of any " being ſent to the region of the damned, to proclaim the glad tidings of ſalvation. If any were to " be ſent, it might be ſuppoſed that they would be " of the number of the faithful. But this is likewiſe " declared impoſſible: Luke xvi. 26, 'And beſides " all this, between us and you there is a great gulf " fixed: ſo that they which would paſs from hence " to you, cannot; neither can they paſs to us, that " would come from thence.' There are here as many " weighty reaſons as there are words. Mention is " made of a *gulf*, which alone is the indication of an " impaſſable region. It is *great* by the very nature " thereof. It is *fixed* by the unchangeable counſel of " God. Nay, it renders the way impaſſable *to them* " *that would*, and that from *both* ſides. And Abraham urges this conſideration above all, the very " equity of the proceeding, which reſulted from their " former enjoyments. In which manner, both a " *moral* and a *phyſical* neceſſity is indicated; and " alſo impoſſibility in every reſpect, through any " new legiſlation of God; or the leaſt abatement, " much leſs freedom, to be obtained from the chains " of darkneſs. Can we imagine that Abraham would " *have been* repreſented as ſo inimical to *his own ſon*, " *and unwilling* to excite in him the leaſt hope of the " alleviation

" alleviation of his miſery, if any could have been in-
" dulged? And was it not more agreeable to the in-
" finite mercy of God, that he ſhould cheriſh and
" ſtrengthen the ſmalleſt ſparks of divine love in one
" deprecating him, if any ray of it ſhould have ap-
" peared?"*

Mr. Wincheſter ſays, "I believe that Jeſus Chriſt
" was not only able to paſs, but that he actually did
" paſs that gulph, which was impaſſable to all *men*,
" but not to him: and he aſſures St. John that he
" had paſſed it; and not only ſo, but that he had the
" keys of the ſame in his poſſeſſion, Rev. i. 18."† Jeſus Chriſt aſſured the apoſtle John that He had "the keys of hell and of death," but He does *not* ſay "that He had paſſed" the gulph. Muſt we believe that every jailer, who has the keys of a priſon, will certainly ſet all the priſoners at liberty?

But Mr. W. has much other proof that Jeſus Chriſt croſſed the gulph, and *preached to the ſpirits in priſon*. After quoting 1 Pet. iii. 18—20.—iv. 5, 6, which paſſages have already been conſidered, he refers to Iſa. xlii. 6, 7. If Mr. W. had read on, he would have found that, not the inhabitants of hell, but the inhabitants of the earth—the ſea—the iſles—the wilderneſs—the cities—the villages of Kedar, &c. are called upon, to "ſing unto the Lord a new ſong," for making this covenant with *them*.

"Chriſt was not only deſigned," ſays Mr. W. "to
" be a covenant of the people, (meaning the Jews)
" and a light to the Gentiles,—which two deſcrip-
" tions comprehend all the living,—but alſo to bring
" out the priſoners from the priſon, and them that ſit
" in darkneſs out of the priſon-houſe, which (if it be
" not a repetition) muſt intend the *dead*, as all the
" *living*

* Diſſertation concerning the Endleſs Duration of puniſhment, p. 39, 40. † Dialogues, p. 66.

"*living* were mentioned before, Iſa. xlix. 6—10."* But why ſhould Mr. W. doubt about its being a repetition? Is not *the preſerved of Iſrael*, a repetition of *the tribes of Jacob?* Mr. W. ſays, *the people* mean *the Jews;* if ſo, *the preſerved of Iſrael*, and *the tribes of Jacob*, are both repetitions ſignifying the ſame people. And ſeveral other *repetitions* might be ſhewn in this paſſage. If Mr. W. had only read the two next verſes, he would have ſeen that theſe *priſoners* are not commanded to *go forth* from hell: "And "I will make all my mountains a way, and my high-"ways ſhall be exalted. Behold, theſe ſhall come "from far; and, lo, theſe from the north and "from the weſt; and theſe from the land of "Sinim"

Iſa. lxi. 1—3, is introduced, (p. 69.) without any comment; as though it did not leave room for a doubt about our Lord's miſſion to hell. Jeſus Chriſt preached from this text one ſabbath-day in a ſynagogue at Nazareth; and opened His diſcourſe with this remarkable obſervation, *This day is this ſcripture fulfilled in your ears*, Luke iv. 16,—21.

Once more,—"Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt," ſays Mr. W. "by his proceſs, hath laid a foundation for the "recovery of all men; for to this end Chriſt both "died, roſe, and revived, that he might be Lord "both of the dead and living, Rom. xiv. 9." p. 70. Read the two preceding verſes: "For none of us "liveth to himſelf, and no man dieth to himſelf. For "whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whe-"ther we die, we die unto the Lord; whether "we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." Mr. W.'s argument is this, Thoſe who live unto the Lord, and die unto the Lord, are aſſured that they are His both in life and death, for He is Lord both of the dead and living; therefore thoſe who live unto the devil, and die unto the devil, ſhall be the Lord's!!!

Epheſ.

* Dialogues, p. 68, 69.

Ephef. iv. 8—10, is cited (p. 72) without a word of comment; we have therefore to guefs where the ſtreſs is laid. Is it ſuppoſed that *the lower parts of the earth* means *hell?* Then it ſeems the local ſituation of hell is at laſt determined! Yet we ought ſurely to have had ſome proof. The ſame phraſe occurs in Pſalm cxxxix. 15. It is there applied to the womb: "My ſubſtance was not hid from Thee, when "I was made in ſecret, and curiouſly wrought in the "loweſt parts of the earth." A ſimilar phraſe occurs in Matt. xii. 40, and is there applied to the grave: "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in "the whale's belly, ſo ſhall the Son of Man be three "days and three nights *in the heart of the earth.*" Our Lord's *ſoul* being three days and three nights in *hell*, could be no *ſign* to the Scribes and Phariſees; but His reſurrection from the grave on the third day, was calculated to create full conviction of His being the Meſſiah. It is not material in which of theſe ſenſes we take the words of the Apoſtle, for they are both equally unfavourable to a deſcent into hell.

Zech. ix. 11. Iſa. xlix. 24, are introduced, (p. 73,) like the above, without any ſort of proof that the *pit* intends *hell*, or that the *captive* is a *damned ſpirit*. David was in the pit, and Iſrael in captivity, but neither the one nor the other was in hell.

"Pſa. cvii. 10—16. This amazing deliverance," ſays Mr. W. p. 73, "ſeems to be deſcribed in ſuch "language as correſponds much better with the de-"liverance of the ſpirits from their dreadful priſon, "than with any temporal mercies that are beſtowed "on mankind *here on earth.*" The deliverance here ſpoken of had taken place when the Pſalm was penned: *He* SAVED *them out of their diſtreſſes.—He brought them out of darkneſs, and the ſhadow of death, and* BRAKE *their bands in ſunder.—He hath broken the gates of braſs, and cut the bars of iron in ſunder.*

under. If this paſſage, therefore, prove the doctrine of Univerſal Reſtoration, that happy event had taken place ſome hundreds of years before Chriſt appeared in the world.

I have, at laſt, gone through all the proofs which Mr. W. offers, that Jeſus Chriſt paſſed the impaſſable gulph, to preach ſalvation to thoſe who cry in vain for a drop of water. Mr. Vidler has added notes to this part of the ſubject, which contain nothing remarkable, except a few Hebrew and Greek characters, from which we perceive that Mr. V. is a *learned* gentleman. His abilities, as a Critic, will be examined under the laſt Section.

What ſettles this point with me, is, if ſinners may be converted in the intermediate ſtate, we muſt give up that important goſpel truth, that every one will be judged according to the *deeds done in the body.* For if ſinners may, and ſome actually do, repent and obtain forgiveneſs betwixt death and judgment, they cannot be condemned and doomed to ſuffer the ſecond death for the ſins of this life. Biſhop Pearſon obſerves, "But neither they" (the dead) "nor we" (the living) "ſhall ever eſcape eternal flames, except we obtain the favour of God before we be ſwallowed by the jaws of death. *We muſt all appear before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the things done in his body:* but if *they* be in the ſtate of ſalvation now, by virtue of Chriſt's deſcent into hell, who were numbered amongſt the damned before his death, at the day of the general judgment they muſt be returned into hell again; or if they be received into eternal happineſs, it will follow either that they were not juſtly condemned to thoſe flames at firſt, according to the general diſpenſations of God, or elſe they did not receive the things done in their body at the laſt; which all ſhall as certainly receive, as all appear, &c."*

The

* Pearſon on the Creed, p. 210.

The reaſon aſſigned in Scripture why no means of converſion are, or will be uſed in hell, is, its inhabitants are incapable of improvement: See Matt. v. 13. Luke xiv. 34, 35. As ſalt, when it hath loſt its ſavour, cannot recover its ſeaſoning power, but is *caſt out* as *good for nothing;* ſo men may be ſo far corrupted by ſin, as to be incapable of a reſtoration to moral virtue; and without this, they cannot be reſtored to happineſs.

Section XVI.

On the Promiſe of Deliverance out of Hell.

"THAT on which I dare venture the whole "cauſe," ſays Mr. Wincheſter, "is, that God hath "*abſolutely promiſed* to reſtore and bring again "thoſe whom he hath *utterly deſtroyed.*" Unleſs God can "abſolutely" reconcile contradictions and perform impoſſibilities, Mr. W. muſt be "utterly" miſtaken. Out of *many inſtances*, which might be adduced in proof of this ſtrange propoſition, Mr. W. ſays, "I will fix upon one that is full to the purpoſe, "and unexceptionable: and that is the caſe of Sodom "and her daughters, &c. Theſe wicked nations "ſhall have their captivity returned; ſhall return to "their former eſtate, and ſhall be received by Jeruſalem as daughters, in the everlaſting covenant; Jeruſalem and her daughters, more wicked themſelves "than Sodom and her daughters, ſhall be reſtored at "the ſame time. It is evident that the inhabitants of "Sodom will be condemned in the day of judgment, "and puniſhed in the lake of fire; conſequently the "return of their captivity is not to be expected till "after the creation of the New Earth. See Ezek. "xvi. 53—63. Matt. xi. 24."*

Were it not that the *whole cauſe* is ventured upon this prophecy, I ſhould not have thought it neceſſary

* Dialogues, p. 179—182.

to pay much attention to it; but ſince ſuch uncommon ſtreſs is laid upon it, I hope the reader will excuſe a little prolixity. Let the following remarks be well conſidered.

1. By Jeruſalem and her daughters, is meant the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin; and by Samaria and her daughters, the other ten tribes. After the revolt of the ten tribes, the King of Judah reſided at Jeruſalem, and the King of Iſrael at Samaria; hence the two houſes of Iſrael, as well as their countries, are ſometimes called by the names of theſe two cities. See Iſa. vii. 9. Jer. xxxi. 5. Ezek. xxiii.

2. The return of the captivity of Jeruſalem and Samaria, or the two houſes of Iſrael, will precede the day of judgment, and cannot be a return from hell. Their return and union are predicted by Iſaiah, chap. xi. 11—16, "The outcaſts of *Iſrael* and diſperſed of *Judah*," can intend no leſs than the two houſes of Iſrael. The prophet ſpeaks of their reconciliation with each other, and of their reſtoration to their own country. Theſe events have never yet taken place: the prophecy, therefore, remains to be fulfilled. They will not be "gathered together" out of hell, but *from the four corners of the earth.* This event, and ſome others mentioned by the prophet, cannot take place after the day of judgment.

The whole of Jeremiah xxxi, is a prediction of the return of the two houſes of Iſrael from their long captivity. Here God expreſsly declares, "I will "make a new covenant with *the houſe of Iſrael* and "with *the houſe of Judah.*" Ezekiel cannot allude to a covenant ſubſequent to this, becauſe this new covenant ſhall not be broken, nor ſhall the Jews ceaſe from being a nation before God for ever, ver. 31—36. There cannot, therefore, be a return from the captivity after this time. This reſtoration will not be out of hell, but "from the *north country*, and from the *coaſts of the earth*," ver. 8. And when it takes

takes place, "there ſhall dwell in Judah, and in the "cities thereof together, huſbandmen, and they that "go forth with flocks," ver. 24. Jeruſalem alſo will "be rebuilt: The city ſhall be built to the Lord from "the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner," &c. ver. 38, 39. No one ſuppoſes, however, that men will be employed in tilling lands, feeding flocks, and building cities, after the day of judgment.

In Ezek. xxxvii. 15—28, we have an account of the gathering of the two houſes of Iſrael from among the heathen into their own land, to poſſeſs it for ever, —of their being united, and having one king over them,—of their increaſe of population,—of God entering into everlaſting covenant with them, &c. It is certain that this prophecy has not yet been fulfilled, and it is certain that the events which are here predicted cannot take place after the general judgment. This covenant, like that in chap. xvi, is ſaid to be *everlaſting*, and is, undoubtedly, the ſame. The return from captivity mentioned in chap. xvi, cannot refer to a period ſubſequent to this, becauſe their apoſtaſy after this time is ſpoken of as impoſſible, ver. 23—26.

3. The return of the captivity of Sodom and her daughters will take place at the time when Jeruſalem and Samaria, or the two houſes of Iſrael, return from their captivity: "*When* I ſhall bring again their cap-"tivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, "and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, "*then* will I bring again the captivity of thy (Jeru-"ſalem's) captives in the midſt of them. *When* thy "ſiſters, Sodom and her daughters, ſhall return to "their former eſtate, *then* thou (Jeruſalem) and thy "daughters, ſhall return to your former eſtate." ver. 53—55.

It follows from the above that Jeruſalem, Samaria, and Sodom will all return from their long captivity in their deſcendants. But Mr. W. ſays, "There are "none of their [Sodom's] deſcendants remaining

" on earth. All were deſtroyed by fire and brim-
" ſtone; none of the inhabitants eſcaped, Lot and
" his daughters excepted, who were only ſojourners."
And I aſk, Is not every man a ſojourner only, in whatever country he be ſituated? It is very probable that Lot intended to make Sodom his reſidence for life. He could not remove his cattle to a more fertile ſpot: Gen. xiii. 10. He had reſided ſeveral years in the city, and ſome of his daughters were married and ſettled in it. By the deſtruction of the country, he loſt all his property, and ſome of his children; but the captivity of Sodom will be turned in the reſtoration of his deſcendants. The Moabites and the Ammonites deſcended from the children that Lot had by his daughters: " Thus were the daughters of Lot
" with child by their father. And the firſt born bare
" a ſon and called his name Moab; the ſame is the
" father of the Moabites. And the younger ſhe alſo
" bare a ſon, and called his name Ben-ammi; the
" ſame is the father of the children of Ammon,"
Gen. xix. 37, 38. We read of their reſtoration in Jer. xlviii. 47.—xlix. 6, " Yet will I bring again
" the captivity of *Moab* in the latter days, ſaith the
" Lord.——I will bring again the captivity of the
" children of Ammon, ſaith the Lord."

I think that the reſtoration of the land of Canaan and Sodom to their former ſtate of fertility, is likewiſe included in this promiſe. The fine plain of Sodom was turned into a lake, now called the Dead Sea, when the inhabitants of Sodom were deſtroyed. And the land of Canaan, which was ſo noted for its fruitfulneſs, is now, by the unanimous teſtimony of travellers, a mere deſert. When God ſhall bring again the captivity of Paleſtine, its fertility will be very great. Amos ix. 13. The land of Sodom was promiſed to Abraham for his poſterity. See Gen. xiii. Before Lot ſeparated from Abraham, " he lifted up
" his eyes and beheld all the plain of Jordan that it
" was well watered every where, before the Lord
deſtroyed

" deſtroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the gar-
" den of the Lord.—And the Lord ſaid unto Abra-
" ham, after that Lot was ſeparated from him, Lift
" up now thine eyes and look from the place where
" thou art, northward, and ſouthward, and eaſtward,
" For all the land which thou ſeeſt, to thee will I
" give it and to thy ſeed for ever. Ariſe, walk thro'
" the land, in the length of it, and in the breadth of
" it: for I will give it unto thee." Here we ſee that the plain of Sodom lay full in view; and ſince we cannot doubt of Abraham's obedience to the Divine command, we are warranted in ſaying, that he took poſſeſſion of it, by walking over it. But it is certain that neither he nor his poſterity have yet enjoyed it: the promiſe, therefore, remains to be fulfilled.

The promiſe made to Jeruſalem in ver. 61, cannot well be applied to the perſons only; but if we ſuppoſe that the land of Iſrael, with the ten tribes, and the land of Sodom, with the Moabites and Ammonites, will then be united with the land and tribes of Judah and Benjamin, under one government, the capital of which ſhall be Jeruſalem, the difficulties will vaniſh. We can eaſily ſee how Jeruſalem can *receive* Sodom and Samaria, and how theſe *ſiſters* will then become her *daughters*. But if it be ſtill inſiſted on, that the promiſe will only be fulfilled in the reſtoration of the ancient inhabitants of theſe cities to heaven, I hope we ſhall be told, how Jeruſalem can be ſaid to *receive* Sodom and Samaria,—how theſe *ſiſters* can be *given* to her for *daughters*,—and how they can all return to their *former eſtate*.

Mr. Winchester oppoſes the viſion of Ezekiel, ch. xlvii, to the promiſe made to Abraham; becauſe it is there ſaid, that the deadly waters ſhall be healed, and that the lake ſhall produce an abundance of excellent fiſh. It would be a very eaſy taſk to ſhew that the viſion in queſtion cannot be literally realized; but it is unneceſſary. Mr. W. grants, that many people will be employed in the fiſhery, and that the

fiſh will be *more uſeful* for food to the inhabitants, than all the vegetables that would grow there.* Suppoſing this to be the caſe, the captivity of that preſent uſeleſs lake will then be turned: But people will not be employed in fiſhing upon the lake, and in drying their nets upon its ſhores, after the day of judgment. I dare ſay that, by this time, the reader will conclude with me, that if the *whole cauſe* cannot be built upon a better foundation than this prophecy, it muſt lie in ruins for ever.

Section XVII.

On the Strength of the Terms which are applied to Future Puniſhment.

FROM obſerving that the very ſame terms are uſually applied to future happineſs, which are applied to future miſery, Mr. Whiſton gave up eternal ſalvation with eternal puniſhment. The modern Univerſaliſts inſiſt "that there are many ſtronger expreſſions "(even in our tranſlation) to ſet forth the well-being "of the righteous, than any that are uſed as con-"nected with the miſery of the wicked."† This is abſolutely impoſſible. The Engliſh Language does not contain ſtronger expreſſions, relative to duration, than *eternal*, *everlaſting*, *for ever and ever*; and all theſe are uſed to expreſs the duration of the wrath to come. Since, however, it has been repeatedly urged, that the promiſes are much ſtronger than the threatenings, I have put down, in the left hand column below, the texts which Mr. Winchester thinks, "will "ſhew us that the felicity of the righteous is pro-"miſed in *much ſtronger* language than the miſery "of

* Dialogues, p. 181. Vidler's God's Love, p. 85.

† Winchester's Dialogues, p. 29. Wright's Examination, p. 9, 10.

" of the wicked is threatened in the Scriptures;" and in the oppoſite column, I have put down the texts which, I think, ſhew that future puniſhment is expreſſed in *as ſtrong* terms as future happineſs. By comparing them, the reader will ſee, that the two doctrines muſt ſtand or fall together.

Iſrael ſhall be ſaved in Jehovah with an *everlaſting* ſalvation; ye ſhall not be aſhamed nor confounded *world without end*, Iſa. xlv. 17.

An inheritance, *incorruptible*, and *undefiled*, and that *fadeth not away*, reſerved in heaven, 1 Pet. i. 4.

Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which *cannot be moved*, Heb. xii. 7.

Neither *can they die any more*, Luke xx. 36.

I give unto them *eternal* life, and they *ſhall never periſh*, John x. 28.

Whoſoever liveth and believeth in me, *ſhall never die*, John xi. 26.

This is the bread that cometh

And the ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up *forever and ever*: and they have *no reſt day nor night*, Rev. xiv. 11.

Ye are the ſalt of the earth: but if the ſalt have loſt its ſavour, *wherewith ſhall it be ſalted?* It is thenceforth *good for nothing*, but to be *caſt out*, Matt. v. 13.

They that go down into the pit *cannot hope for thy truth*, Iſa. xxxviii. 18

Neither *can they paſs to us that would come from thence*, Luke xvi. 26.

But he that ſhall blaſpheme againſt the Holy Ghoſt *hath never forgiveneſs*, but is in danger of *eternal* damnation, Mark iii. 29.

The *ſhall never ſee light.*—Their worm *ſhall not die*, Pſalm xlix. 19. Iſa. lxvi. 24.

He that believeth not

cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and *not die*, John vi. 50.

the Son *ſhall not ſee life*, John iii. 36.

Provide yourſelves bags which wax not old, a treaſure in the heavens which faileth not; where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupeth, Luke xii. 33.

It is better for thee to enter into life maimed than to go into hell, into the fire that never ſhall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.—If the ſalt have loſt its ſaltneſs, wherewith will you ſeaſon it? Mark ix. 43—49.

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory, 2 Cor. iv. 17.

Whoſoever ſpeaketh againſt the Holy Ghoſt, it ſhall not be forgiven, him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come, Matt. xii. 32.

Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? Shall tribulation, &c. For I am perſuaded that neither death, &c. ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, Rom. viii. 35—39.

Many, I ſay unto you, will ſeek to enter in and ſhall not be able.—It is impoſſible to renew them again unto repentance, Luke xiii. 24. Heb. vi. 4—6.

Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo, John xiv. 19.

Woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born, Mark xiv. 21.

The Spirit itſelf beareth witneſs with our ſpirit, that

The ſon of the bondwoman ſhall not be heir with

we are the children
)d. And if children,
heirs, heirs of God,
oint heirs with Chrift,
. viii. 16, 17.

with the ſon of the free woman.---For this ye know that no whoremonger, &c. hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Chriſt and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words, Gal. iv. 30. Epheſ. v. 5, 6.

m that overcometh
I make a pillar in the
le of my God, and
ıall go no more out,
iii. 12.

And there ſhall in no wiſe enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatſoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, Rev. xxi. 27.

the living Father
ſent me, and I live
ıe Father, ſo he that
h me, even he ſhall
)y me, John vi. 57.

Verily, verily I ſay unto you, except ye eat the fleſh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you, John vi. 53.

: have in heaven a
r, and an *enduring*
ance.

He that ſoweth to the fleſh, ſhall of the fleſh reap corruption, Gal. vi. 8.

'hen Chriſt, who is
iſe, ſhall appear, then
ye alſo appear with
in glory, Col. iii. 4.

Ye ſhall ſeek me, and ſhall die in your ſins: whither I go ye cannot come, John viii. 21.

the common tranſlation muſt decide this contro-
, and it be that to which Mr. Winchester appeals,
el no heſitation in ſaying, that every unbiaſed
l will be convinced, from the foregoing contraſt,
eternal puniſhment is as clearly revealed, in the

ſacred writings, as eternal happineſs, and that both doctrines are eſtabliſhed beyond diſpute. But the common tranſlation is ſuppoſed to be full of error on this ſubject, particularly in the rendering of the words *aion* and *aionios*.

It is ſurpriſing what pains the Univerſaliſts have taken to explain away the meaning of the word *aionios*. Mr. Winchester in his Dialogues, p. 17, ſays it intends *a hidden period;* in his remarks on Mr. Taylor's Sermon, p. 45, he renders it *perpetual, during a hidden period;* and again, p. 47, *perpetual, unceaſing*. Mr. Vidler ſays, it ſhould be rendered *age-laſting*. In Mr. Scarlett's tranſlation, we read of *aionion* life, *aionion* puniſhment, &c. According to Mr. W., therefore, the word contains in it two ideas, *perpetuity*, and *duration;* according to Mr. V. it contains only one, namely, *duration;* and, according to Mr. S., it contains none at all, or, which is the ſame, its meaning cannot be known. Amidſt all this confuſion amongſt pretended critics, what are the illiterate to do? It is moſt probable they will ſhut up their Bibles as containing unintelligible jargon.

Let us ſuppoſe a poor afflicted woman reading in Mr. Scarlett's Teſtament, "Our light affliction, which "is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more "exceeding *aionion* weight of glory." She is viſited by Mr. Vidler, a Chriſtian Miniſter, and the following converſation takes place.

Wom. Pray, Sir, what is the meaning of the word *aionion?*

Min. "Leigh, Kircher, Parkhurſt, Schrevelius, "and others, render *aion*, by *eternity*, and *aionios*, "ſay they, is *eternal, everlaſting*. But I appeal "from theſe great authorities to the common ſenſe of "mankind, and affirm, that *aion*, does not mean "eternity, nor *aionios*, eternal or everlaſting."*

W. Indeed,

* Dialogues, p. 25, note.

W. Indeed, Sir, you muſt be a very great ſcholar & do be kind enough to tell me what *aionios* means.

M. "The proper idea of *aionios* ſeems to be "*age-laſting.*" †

W. Age-laſting! That is ſurely *a fine Dictionary word*, which is ſpoken only by *great folks*, ſince I never heard it before. What muſt I underſtand by *age-laſting?*

M. "As *aionios* is derived from *aion*, and has "relation to it as an adjective to its ſubſtantive, it "can only deſcribe ſomething relating to that parti- "cular aion or age ſpoken of, and with which it is "connected." ‡

W. And pray, Sir, how long does an age laſt?

M. "*Aion* (or age) is taken for an hundred "years,—for the duration of a man's life, which is "about ſeventy years,—for any meaſurement of time, "if its termination be hidden,—yea, even for a "year." §

W. What! cannot I be ſure that *aionion* glory means more than one year's glory? and does my fifty years of affliction and trouble deſerve to be called light and momentary in compariſon of this?

It is eaſy to ſee that the righteous have exactly as much reaſon to fear that the duration of their happi- neſs will be limited, as the wicked have to hope that their miſery will end. And ſurely when a miniſter is employed in adminiſtering hope to the hypocrite, and in making the hearts of the righteous ſad, he is em- ployed in a work very unſuitable to his character.

I muſt here inform my readers that I do not pre- tend to be a critic in the Greek tongue; and I ſhould not have dared to follow Mr. V., the ſcourge of Lexicographers, through his critical labours, had he not

† Dialogues, p. 27. ‡ Ib. p. 27, note.
§ God's Love, p. 31.

not appealed from theſe great authorities to the *common ſenſe* of mankind. I hope I poſſeſs a ſmall ſhare of common ſenſe, I will, therefore, venture to examine his criticiſms, and will bring them to this teſt.

" I affirm," ſays Mr. V., " that (αιων) *aion* does " not mean eternity, nor *aionios* eternal or everlaſt- " ing, for which I aſſign the following reaſons:

" 1. The above Lexicographers allow that *aion* is " taken for a hundred years,—for the duration of a " man's life, which is about ſeventy years,—for any " meaſurement of time, eſpecially if it be of long " duration, or if its termination be hidden,—yea, " for a year."

" 2. That the writers of the New Teſtament do " not uſe the word *aiôn* to convey the idea of eter- " nity is evident, becauſe there are *different aions* " ſpoken of, and one *aion* is repreſented as ſucceed- " ing another. Luke xvi. 8.—xx. 34, 35. Epheſ. " i. 20. Now we cannot poſſibly underſtand theſe " Scriptures as meaning *this eternity*, and *that* " *eternity*.

" 3. We read of the aionion covenant of circum- " ciſion, Gen. xvii. 13.—The aionion covenant of " prieſthood, Numb. xxv. 13.—The aionion ſtatute " of the day of atonement, Levit. xvi. 34. &c. It " would be an affront to Scripture and common ſenſe " both, to aſcribe *eternity* to theſe things merely be- " cauſe they are ſaid to be of *aionion* duration.

" 4. That the word *aion* and its derivatives, even " when applied to God, do not convey the idea of " eternal duration, may be ſtill more clearly ſeen " by obſerving that we read of a time *before* the " aions began, and alſo of the *end* of the aions, " 1 Cor. ii. 7. Heb. ix. 26. I aſk, Can that word " which admits of the exiſtence of time *before* the " period which it deſcribes began, be expreſſive of " eternity paſt? Can that word which admits of an

" *end*

" *end* to the duration of the period which it deſcribes, " be expreſſive of eternity to come? If not, how " do the oppoſers of the Univerſal doctrine maintain " the endleſs duration of future puniſhment, merely " becauſe it is a few times ſaid to be *aionion* in the " Scriptures?"*

I will ſuppoſe Mr. V. has proved that the words αιων and αιωνιος do not mean *eternity* and *eternal, in the texts to which he refers*, though a critic would, perhaps, diſpute it in ſome of the inſtances. But what follows? why Mr. V. would have all men of common ſenſe conclude, that the words, under conſideration, *never* mean eternity and eternal. Againſt this concluſion, however, it may be objected, that Mr. V. allows the word αιων is applied to different portions of duration: " It is uſed," ſays he, " for a " hundred years—for ſeventy years—for one year:" now he might as well ſay that, becauſe the word is ſometimes uſed for the duration of a man's life, therefore it is never applied to any other ſubject, as ſay that becauſe it is ſometimes applied to ſubjects whoſe duration is limited, therefore it is never uſed to denote endleſs duration.

In our Engliſh dictionaries, the word *all* is explained to mean, *the whole, every thing*. But according to Mr. V.'s logic, we may " appeal from theſe great au- " thorities to the common ſenſe of mankind, and " affirm that it does not mean ſo," and prove it thus: " The word *all* is ſometimes applied to men only, " 1 Cor. xv. 22.—ſometimes to a ſingle nation only, " Matt. iii. 5.—and ſometimes to a ſingle family only, " Acts xvi. 33, 34. The word *all*, therefore, can- " not ſignify more than a *part*, and ſometimes a very " ſmall part too." But is this concluſion juſt? Will it not be replied, that the word *all*, in the above inſtances, is applied to ſubjects which do not take in its full

* Dialogues, p. 25—28, Notes.

full meaning? Does not almoſt every boy in a Grammar-ſchool know that this is the caſe with words in general? Why then does Mr. V. inſult our common ſenſe by inſinuating, that the words αιων and αιωνιος NEVER mean *eternity* and *eternal*, when he can aſſign no better reaſon for ſo bold an aſſertion than that, in *ſome* texts, they are applied to ſu bjects whoſe duration is limited?

In Mr. V.'s way of proving, we may ſhew that the word *God* does not denote the *Supreme Being*: Thus,—"That the word" *God*, "when applied to" the Supreme Being, "does not convey the idea of" a Divine Perſon, "may be clearly ſeen by obſerving that which we read of" magiſtrates, *I have ſaid, Ye are gods*. "I aſk, Can that word which" is applied to men, "be expreſſive of" a Divine Being? "If not, how do the oppoſers of" atheiſm maintain" there is ſuch a Being, "merely becauſe it is a few times ſaid" of ſome ſort of a being, that he is *God!* But ſuch a method of criticiſing is ſo obviouſly abſurd, that I will not ſpend more time in expoſing it.

On turning over to Mr. V.'s *Gods Love to His Creatures*, p. 32, I find the following remarkable paſſage. "We think it evident, that the longeſt *aion*, or age, "mentioned in the New Teſtament, is of limited du- "ration, namely, that of the mediation of Chriſt, "which is ſaid to be *eis ton aiona tou aionos*, ren- "dered, in our tranſlation, *for ever and ever*. This "age includes in it all others, whether they are paſt "ages—this preſent age—or the ages to come; and "this great *age of the age* (ſo literally) ſhall of it- "ſelf run out, and be cloſed; for *then cometh the* "*end*, when he ſhall have delivered up the kingdom "to God, &c. 1 Cor. xv. 24—28. Here we are ex- "preſsly informed of the *end* of Chriſt's Kingdom."

I ſuppoſe Mr. V. refers to Heb. i. 8. He has, however, taken for granted what cannot be proved, namely, that the αιων relates to the *mediation* of Chriſt.

Chriſt. The apoſtle refers it to His throne as, God, and not as Mediator: "Thy throne, O *God*, is for ever "and ever." I believe the doctrine of the Divinity of Chriſt has no place in Mr. V.'s creed; yet it is eſtabliſhed in this chapter beyond diſpute. He is repreſented as the *Brightneſs* of His Father's glory—the *Expreſs Image* of his Perſon—the *Creator* and *Upholder* of all things, being that Jehovah that in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, Pſal. 102, as a proper object of *worſhip to angels*,—and *immutable*. Mr. V. believes that the work of mediation will be finiſhed at the creation of the new heaven and new earth, and the deſcent of the New Jeruſalem: yet in this glorious city, where "there ſhall be no "more curſe," we read, that "The *Throne* of *God* "and of the *Lamb* ſhall be in it," Rev. xxii. 3. We ſee here, that Jeſus Chriſt will have a throne after the work of mediation is ended; and it is impoſſible to ſhew that the Divine Emmanuel will not reign on this throne through all endleſs duration.

Mr. V. ſays, "Here we are expreſsly informed of "the end of Chriſt's kingdom." But the end of Chriſt's *kingdom* is neither expreſſed nor implied, either in the paſſage to which Mr. V. refers, or any other. Inſtead of the kingdom coming to an end, it is ſaid to be "delivered up to God." It is the work of *mediation* that will come to an end at the time of the reſurrection of the dead, (ſee the preceding verſes) and not the *kingdom*. The *mode* of adminiſtration will be changed: the Sovereignty will be transferred from the hands of a mediator into the hands of God: and the Son, as *God*, though not as *Mediator*, in union with the Father and the Holy Spirit, will reign on His throne for ever and ever. Inſtead of Chriſt's kingdom coming to an end, we are aſſured that "of "His kingdom there ſhall be *no end*," and that it "*cannot be moved*," Luke i. 33. Heb. xii. 28.

Mr. V.

Mr. V. obſerves in another place* on 1 Cor. xv. 24, "The happineſs of the righteous will then" (when Chriſt ſhall have delivered up the kingdom to the Father) "no longer exiſt in the *kingdom ſtate*, but "in a more glorious ſtate and degree, under the "*ſole* and *immediate* dominion of the Father." What ſilly nonſenſe is this! The Father will have *dominion*, and yet there will be *no kingdom!* When Chriſt ſhall deliver up the kingdom to God, does Mr. V. ſuppoſe that God will deſtroy it? or how is it, that "the "happineſs of the righteous will then no longer exiſt in the *kingdom ſtate*?"

Mr. V. ſums up all the argument in the following words: "On the whole it follows, that *aionion*, as "connected with future puniſhment, does not imply "eternity of duration, but that there is an *aion* or age "appointed for the puniſhment of the wicked, and "therefore their puniſhment is called *aionion* or *age-*"*laſting;* and when that age expires, the puniſh-"ment of it will ceaſe."† Will it indeed? The happineſs of the righteous is called *aionion* in Matt. xxv. 46, and ſeveral other places. Now apply Mr. V.'s criticiſm to it: "On the whole, it follows, that "*aionion*, as connected with future" happineſs, "does not imply eternity of duration, but that there "is an *aion* or age appointed for the" happineſs "of "the" righteous, "and therefore their" happineſs "is called *aionion* or *age-laſting;* and when that age "expires, the" happineſs "of it will ceaſe." Once more; the life of the *true God* is called *aionian* in 1 John v. 20. Now apply Mr. V.'s criticiſm again: "On the whole, it follows, that *aionian*, as con-"nected with" the life of God, "does not imply "eternity of duration, but that there is an *aion* or "age appointed for the" life of God, "and there-"fore His life is called *aionion* or *age-laſting;* and "when

* Dialogues, p. 28. Note. † Ibid.

" when that age expires, the" life of God "will " ceaſe!"—"On the whole it follows," that if we follow Mr. V. as a guide, he will deprive us of common ſenſe—of endleſs happineſs—and of God!!

Having examined at the bar of common ſenſe the proofs adduced in favour of the limited meaning of αιων and αιωνιος, I muſt now attend to what Mr. V. has ſaid about the old and new tranſlation of theſe terms. "It is not a little ſingular," ſays he, "that " when *aion* occurs as a noun, it ſhould be ſo fre- " quently rendered world: and when as an adjective " the ſenſe ſhould be *eternal*, *everlaſting*, *ever*, &c. " yet ſo our tranſlation runs. The impropriety of " this will appear, if we take ſome of the paſſages, " and enquire whether *world and its relatives*, will " do as a tranſlation of *aion*, *and its derivatives*. " Matthew vi. 13. Thine is the kingdom, and the " power, and the glory, *to the worlds*.—John vi. 51. " He that eateth of this bread ſhall live *to the world*.— " Chap. xi. 26. He ſhall not die *to the world*.—Rev. " xiv. 11. The ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up " *to a world of worlds*. Theſe texts, to which many " more might be added, are ſufficient to ſhew, that " *world* is not a proper tranſlation of *aion*, becauſe " in many places it cannot poſſibly bear that ſenſe; " but it may be rendered age every where."*

Render it *age* then in John xi. 26, one of the texts here referred to: "And whoſoever liveth and believ- " eth in Me *ſhall not die to the age*. Believeſt " thou this!" Mr. V. obſerves in another place,† " whatever period the age of ages may be, the puniſh- " ment is to continue *to* that age, not *during* it." Now apply his new tranſlation, with this explication, to two more of the above texts: "Thine is the king- " dom, and the power, and the glory, *to* the ages, " not

* Dialogues, p. 26. Note. † Ibid. p. 48. Note.

" not *during* them, Matt. vi. 13. He that eateth of " *this bread*, ſhall live *to* the age, not *during* it, " John vi. 51." So then during theſe ages the ſaints cannot live, nor can God Almighty poſſeſs either kingdom, or power, or glory! " Paul, thou art " beſide thyſelf, *much learning* doth make thee " mad!"

Mr. V., however, has proved that where our tranſlators render αιων *world*, they could not properly have rendered it *eternity;* and that where they render it *ever*, they could not properly have rendered it *world;* and till Mr. V. can produce better proof than the above that it ſhould always be rendered by the *ſame* Engliſh word, people of common ſenſe will conclude, that they have done perfectly right in varying the Engliſh word, according to the ſubject to which the term αιων is applied.

But I have not yet done with this paragraph. I inſiſt upon it that the word αιων, in the three firſt texts, cannot be juſtly rendered by any Engliſh word which imports leſs than eternity. 1. God will ſurely have the *kingdom*, and the *power*, and the *glory*, *for ever*, or *to eternity*, and not merely for a limited period. 2. The αιωνα, which denotes the duration of the life of the righteous in John vi. 51, cannot import any period ſhort of eternity; for in the preceding verſe we read, "This is the bread which cometh " down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, " and *not die*." Now if he who eateth of this bread ſhall not die, he muſt ſtrictly and properly live *for ever*, or *to eternity*. 3. When the context of John xi. 26, is conſidered, the ſame word again cannot be limited. " Jeſus ſaith unto her, I am the reſurrec- " tion, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though " he were dead, yet ſhall he live; and whoſoever " liveth and believeth in Me ſhall not die, εις τον αιωνα, " that is, ſhall *never* die." The reaſon aſſigned why believers ſhall live, is, Chriſt is *the life*. This is offerred

ferved to the ſaints as a ſecurity againſt death; but it cannot be received in this light, if *αιων* intend no more than a limited period: our tranſlators have, therefore, very properly rendered the word *never*.—Rev. xiv. 11, will be conſidered below.—Here then Mr. V. himſelf has furniſhed his readers of common ſenſe with three texts, where the word *αιων* means *eternity*. We may therefore ſafely aſſume, that *eternity* is its proper meaning. This word, like others, is ſometimes applied to ſubjects which do not take in its full meaning, and according to its various applications, our tranſlators have rendered it by different Engliſh words, always, however, giving it its full and proper meaning where the ſubject would admit of it; and common ſenſe, inſtead of charging them with "paſſing a deception upon the Engliſh reader," as Mr. V. invidiouſly does, will approve their conduct, and admire their learning, judgment, and honeſty.

Mr. V. contends that the proper rendering of *αιωνιος* is *age-laſting*; and to this new coined phraſe he would have us attach the idea of limited duration. According to this rendering then, we muſt read John iii. 16, thus: "God ſo loved the world, that He gave "His only-begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth "in Him, ſhould not periſh, but have *age-laſting* "life." Now this makes the paſſage perfect nonſenſe. For if the life promiſed to the righteous be of limited duration, what ſecurity does it afford them againſt periſhing? Suppoſe ten thouſand troops were to be diſbanded, what would be thought of the following proclamation? "His Majeſty has ſo much love to his ſoldiers, that whoſoever hath ſerved him ſhall not come to poverty, but ſhall receive one day's pay after he is diſcharged." Would not every man concerned in it think himſelf inſulted? And yet one day's proviſion is a better ſecurity againſt poverty in this world, than life for the longeſt limited period is againſt periſhing in the world to come. Apply Mr. V.'s tranſlation to 2 Cor. iv. 18, "We look not at

" the things which are ſeen, but at the things which " are not ſeen: for the things which are ſeen are " temporal: but the things which are not ſeen are " *age-laſting*." Now ſince the things which are age-laſting are of limited duration, they muſt be temporary; the ſenſe therefore, or rather nonſenſe of the paſſage, may be given thus: " We look not at the " things which are ſeen, for they are temporal; but " we look at the things which are not ſeen for they " are temporary!" See alſo Rom. xvi. 26, Heb. ix. 14, 1 Tim. i. 17. Muſt not every man be filled with horror at reading, of *age-laſting God*, *age-laſting Spirit*, and the *King age-laſting*? Can either common ſenſe, or the ſmalleſt ſpark of piety ſhort of atheiſm, endure ſuch wretched criticiſms? The reader will not be ſurpriſed that Mr. Scarlet has given no tranſlation of this word in his New Teſtament; ſince to have uſed any term expreſſive of limited duration in the above, and many other inſtances, would have expoſed his want of common ſenſe. After all, therefore, we may venture to abide by the deciſion of thoſe great authorities which Mr. V. has treated with ſuch ſovereign contempt.

But Mr. V. ſays,—" As for the eternity of God, " we learn it from the neceſſity of his exiſtence." But why does Mr. V. run from *Revelation* to *Neceſſary Exiſtence*, to prove the eternity of God? is it becauſe the eternity of God is not taught in Scripture? how then can immortality be brought to light by the goſpel? But what do the illiterate know about *Neceſſary Exiſtence*? are they qualified for metaphyſical diſquiſition? And none of the Divine Perfections, taught by the light of nature, are more clearly revealed in the Scriptures than his Eternity: how happens it then, that in this ſolitary inſtance the perfect word of God is imperfect?

Yet ſtill, perhaps, it will be objected, " Suppoſe it be granted that the proper meaning of the word is *eternal*,

eternal, yet ſince it is ſometimes applied to ſubjects whoſe duration is limited, the application of it to future puniſhment does not of itſelf prove that puniſhment to be eternal." To this I anſwer, 1. No word ſhould be interpreted in an improper ſenſe, unleſs there be ſomething in the ſubject which renders ſuch an interpretation neceſſary; but we can ſee nothing in the nature of future puniſhment from whence we can infer that it will not be endleſs. 2. The connexion in which the word ſtands, when applied to this ſubject, determines the ſenſe of it to be eternal, ſee Mark iii. 29. Here its meaning is determined by the phraſe, *hath never forgiveneſs*. The Evangeliſt Luke alſo obſerves of this blaſphemy, *it ſhall not be forgiven*, Luke xii. 10. An *aionion* puniſhment, for a ſin that *hath never forgiveneſs*, and that *ſhall not be forgiven*, muſt neceſſarily be endleſs.

The words which, in the common tranſlation of the New Teſtament, are rendered *for ever and ever*, are uſed three times in relation to the puniſhment of the wicked, ſee Rev. xiv. 11,—xix. 3,—xx. 10. In the firſt of theſe texts the articles are wanting; but that circumſtance by no means diminiſhes its force. This form of expreſſion cannot mean leſs than proper eternity; for the duration of the Divine exiſtence—of the glory, and wiſdom, and honour, and power aſcribed to God by ſaints and angels—and of the homage they pay to Him—are all expreſſed by it, ſee 1 Tim. i. 17, Rev. iv. 9, 10,—vii. 12, &c. The objections to the words meaning endleſs duration, when applied to the puniſhment of impenitent ſinners, are ſo very weak, that I ſhould not condeſcend to pay them any attention, were it not that the parties would perhaps complain of the neglect, and have the aſſurance to bring them forward again. They are therefore put down and replied to in the following order.

"1ſt, If *for ever and ever* is a longer time than "*for ever*, which muſt be granted, then is there ſome

" *proportion* between them: but any proportion at " all between two periods, ſuppoſes both *to have an* " *end*, or there could be no proportion." * We do not grant that *for ever and ever*, is a longer period than *for ever*. Our Lord ſometimes prefixed to His diſcourſes the words *verily, verily;* ſometimes only *verily*. But does any man ſuppoſe, from this circumſtance, that there is a greater degree of truth in ſome of His diſcourſes than in others, and that there is abſolute truth in none of them? Yet this concluſion would be as juſt as Mr. Winchester's, that *for ever and ever* is a longer period than *for ever*, and that, therefore, neither of theſe phraſes mean endleſs duration. It is not ſurely pretended that the *vanity of vanities* in Eccleſ. i. 2, ſignifies more emptineſs than ſimply *vanity*. Inſtances might be multiplied, but it is unneceſſary.

" 2dly, I find a time promiſed when there ſhall be " no more death, &c. Rev. xxi. 4, 5." † This text has been conſidered already. Sect. 12.

3dly, Mr. Winchester draws an argument from 2 Pet. iii. 5—12. ‡ But it is ſhewn under Sect. XII, that " the earth, in its burnt, melted, and diſſolved ſtate," will not be the ſecond death. It does not therefore follow, that when the new heaven and new earth are created, the puniſhment of the wicked will ceaſe.

" 4thly, They are to be tormented *day and night*, " for ever and ever. But it is intimated in Job xxvi. " 10, Rev. xxi. 25, that *day and night* ſhall come " to an end." § But whoever ſuppoſed before, that when ſinners are ſaid to have " *no reſt* day nor night," any other idea was intended to be conveyed, than that their puniſhment ſhall be *without intermiſſion*. If the *day and night* muſt be underſtood literally, why

* Dialogues, p. 9. † Ibid.
‡ Dialogues, p. 10. § Ibid.

why not alſo Matt. xxv. 30, Jude 13? but who can then reconcile *day and night* with *utter darkneſs*, and with *the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever?*

Mr. Vidler has added to the abſurdity by pretending, in a long note,* that "darkneſs of every kind, "whether ſpiritual or material, ſtands oppoſed to "God,"—that "in the preſent ſtate, where neither "abſolute good nor abſolute evil takes place without "mixture, there is alſo a mixture of light and darkneſs in the revolution of day and night,"—that "in "the New Jeruſalem ſtate, where the ſervants of "God are totally delivered from mental darkneſs, "there will be continual light, to the total excluſion "of darkneſs, Rev. xxi. 25,"—and that "in the "future age of puniſhment there will ſtill be the revolution of day and night—even to the age of ages; "to intimate, perhaps, that, however ſeverely the "wicked may be puniſhed, yet it will by no means "be inconſiſtent with mercy and love; but that the "Divine Spirit will continue to operate in reconciling ſinners to God, until their darkneſs be expelled "by his ſhining into their hearts. And when all "ſhall be filled with the effulgent glory of him who "is the image of God, then darkneſs, both ſpiritual "and material, will be entirely deſtroyed."

Natural and ſpiritual darkneſs, it ſeems, were born together, and muſt die together! But was there no natural darkneſs in this world before the introduction of ſin? was there no meaſurement of time by day and night previous to that period? did our mother Eve, by eating the forbidden fruit, ſo far diſturb the frame of nature as to give the world its diurnal motion?—This mixture of light and darkneſs in the revolution of day and night, Mr. V. pretends, intimates a mixture of mercy and love with their puniſhment; but the Apoſtle has told us, in the ſame paragraph where

* Dialogues, p. 11, Note.

where he ſays "they have no reſt day nor night," that they "ſhall drink of the wine of the *wrath of* "*God*, which is poured out *without mixture*."

"5thly, But the great reaſon of all, why I do not "conceive that *for ever and ever* doth certainly in-"tend *endleſs duration*, is, becauſe I find the words "as often uſed for times and periods that muſt have "an end, as you find them uſed for the miſery of "the wicked." * Mr. W. refers to Iſa. xxx. 8, Jer. vii. 1—7, xxv. 5. But not to mention that the phraſe εις τους αιωνας των αιωνων, occurring ſo often in the New Teſtament, and rendered in our Tranſlation *for ever and ever*, is not found in any of thoſe paſſages, or, I believe in any other, in the Septuagint (or Greek) verſion of the Old Teſtament; the preſent enquiry is not about the meaning of the Hebrew words in the Old Teſtament, but of the Greek in the New. And as to this point inſtead of "bringing three texts where "the words are uſed in a limited ſenſe, to invalidate "the evidences for endleſs damnation, drawn from "the three paſſages where they are uſed in relation "to that ſubject," he only introduces *one*, namely, Heb. i. 8. But I have ſhewn above that this text cannot be proved to intend leſs than endleſs duration; and we challenge the Univerſaliſts to produce a ſingle inſtance out of the New Teſtament, where this phraſe muſt be underſtood with ſome reſtriction. This has not yet been done, and we firmly believe it to be impoſſible. And ſurely it is without all ſhadow of reaſon, to pretend that theſe words intend a limited period when applied to future puniſhment, and yet be unable to bring forward one text where they have ſuch a meaning when applied to other ſubjects.—But ſuppoſe three, or threeſcore inſtances could be produced out of the New Teſtament, of the phraſe in queſtion being applied to ſubjects whoſe duration is limited, this would not prove, that *endleſs duration* is

* Dialogues, p. 12.

is not its proper meaning; for, as I have obſerved before, it is common for words in general to be applied to ſubjects which do not take in their full meaning. I am ſo confident of the truth of this remark, that I do not hefitate to ſay, the Univerſaliſts cannot controvert it without betraying ignorance of the firſt rudiments of general grammar, and expoſing their criticiſms to the deriſion of every ſchool boy.

6thly, Mr. Vidler alters the tranſlation thus, *to the age of ages*, and obſerves upon it, "Whatever pe-"riod this may be, the puniſhment is to continue *to* "that age, not *during* it."* This is making ſhort work of it indeed! But what neceſſity then to trouble ourſelves at all about the duration of the age of ages? If the puniſhment of ſinners be to continue only *to* that age but not *during* it, it is of no importance, in this controverſy, whether it means *eternity* or *a day*. Dare Mr. V. apply his criticiſm to Rev. v. 13, 14? Muſt we ſay, that ſaints and angels will worſhip God *to* that age, not *during* it! and that God Himſelf will live *to* that age, not *during* it!!

7thly, Mr. V. informs us in the next paragraph, that "the *age of ages* in the New Teſtament has "clearly a reference to the Jubilee in the Old Teſta-"ment; and what this is in the type, that is in re-"ality—As the Jubilee gave univerſal liberty to all "who were in ſervitude,—exonerated every obliga-"tion from thoſe who were in debt,—and returned "every man to his inheritance: the commencement "of the age of ages will give ſpiritual liberty to "every captive who is confined in the priſon-houſe,— "relieve every one who is burthened with guilt,—and "reſtore every one to the enjoyment of the Divine "favour, which is the proper inheritance of every "rational creature."

It is not quite certain that "the Jubilee gave uni-"verſal liberty to all who were in ſervitude." Many have

* Dialogues, p. 48. Note.

have thought that the ſervant mentioned in Exod. xxi. 6, is an exempt caſe. And it is very clear that the heathen ſlaves were not to be releaſed at the year of Jubilee; for juſt after the law to ſet the Hebrew ſervants at liberty at that time, it is added, "Thy bond-"men and thy bond-maids, which thou ſhalt have of "the heathen that are round about you—ye ſhall "take them as an inheritance for your children after "you, to inherit them for a poſſeſſion; they ſhall be "your bond-men for ever, Levit. xxv. 44,—46." Here the word *ever* is oppoſed to the *Jubilee*. Hence Lampe obſerves, "If any one were diſpoſed to uſe "trivial and ſtrained arguments, he might defend the "contrary opinion from this paſſage."

Mr. V. has exceeded the bounds of truth in ſaying, that "the Jubilee returned every man to his inherit-"ance." Both houſes and lands might be ſold upon ſuch terms as not to return again to the original proprietors in the year of Jubilee: "And if a man ſell "a dwelling-houſe in a walled city—and it be not "redeemed within the ſpace of a full year; then the "houſe that is in the walled city, ſhall be eſtabliſhed "for ever to him that bought it, throughout his ge-"nerations: *it ſhall not go out in the Jubilee.*—And "if he will not redeem the field, or if he have ſold "the field to another man; it ſhall not be redeemed "any more. But the field when it goeth out in the "Jubilee, ſhall be holy unto the Lord, as a field de-"voted: *the poſſeſſion thereof ſhall be the prieſts,*' "Levit. xxv. 29, 30.—xxvii. 20, 21." But what inheritance have the damned to return to? We know who hath ſaid, "That no whoremonger, nor unclean "perſon, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, "*hath any inheritance* in the kingdom of Chriſt and "of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words, "Epheſ. v. 5, 6."

Mr. V. is wrong again in intimating that the ſpiritual Jubilee will "exonerate every obligation from "thoſe

" thoſe who are in debt, and give ſpiritual liberty to " every captive who is confined in the priſon houſe;" for our Lord declares, " I tell thee, thou ſhalt not " depart thence, till thou haſt paid the very laſt mite, " Luke xii. 59."

But what is there to ſupport the notion that the Jubilee is a type of the *age of ages?* Another will perhaps ere long ſtart up, and carry the analogy a little farther than Mr. V. has done. He may, with equal truth, affirm that, As there were many returns of the Jubilee, ſo there will be many returns of the *age of ages;* and that, as men, who were ſet at liberty in the year of Jubilee, might afterwards ſell themſelves as ſlaves, ſo devils and wicked men, who will be ſet at liberty when the *age of ages* commences, may afterwards ſell themſelves to work wickedneſs, and again become wretched. In ſhort, where ſhall we ſtop, if every type which a fertile imagination can invent, is to ſet aſide the plaineſt texts of Scripture?

What reaſons are here brought forward to juſtify a limited ſenſe and a new tranſlation of αιων, αιωνος, and εις τους αιωνας των αιωνων! It is ſurely a pity we are not all critics, and capable of embelliſhing our pages with Greek characters—what wonderful things we might bring to light! By introducing words into a work from the dead languages, the vulgar are led to conſider the author as a man of learning, and on that ground to attach a degree of importance to his production which it often ill deſerves. From the preceding pages it appears a very eaſy taſk to appreciate Mr. V.'s abilities as a critic. His perpetual play upon Greek words may miſlead the illiterate and unwary, while it muſt diſguſt the intelligent and conſiderate. It is difficult to ſuppoſe how a man could venture to ſend ſuch abſurdities abroad, who is not blinded by vanity. The contempt with which he treats all the Lexicographers, and our venerable Tranſlators, to-

gether with the ſcepticiſm which his notes are calculated to occaſion amongſt the ignorant and the wicked, forbid him the privilege, which is due to miſtaken piety and modeſty—of receiving only a ſlight cenſure.

The paſſages of Scripture which prove endleſs puniſhment, are ſo numerous, that this Section might eaſily be ſwelled into a volume; but I will only bring forward two or three more, which Mr. Wincheſter has taken great pains to explain away.

Matt. xii. 31, 32, Mark iii. 28, 29, Luke xii. 10, Heb. vi. 4—6,—x. 26—29, have all been conſidered as affording very ſtrong proof of endleſs puniſhment. Upon theſe paſſages Mr. W. remarks,—"There is no "kind of diſpute between us, reſpecting the certainty "of the puniſhment of ſuch; the queſtion is, ſhall there "ever come a time when the ſecond death ſhall no "more exiſt? If this can be proved, the concluſion "will be evident, viz. that not one ſhall remain under "the power thereof to all eternity: upon this, and "this alone, depends the ſolution of this awful, "intereſting, and moſt important queſtion; and I "conſider all other anſwers as mere quibbles, com-"pared with this. And if it cannot be proved that "a time will come, when all that bears the name of "death ſhall be deſtroyed, thoſe who commit the ſin "unto death, muſt, at leaſt, be allowed to ſtand as "exceptions to the general rule; and I am apt to "think the rule itſelf will be overthrown." * His proof that the ſecond death ſhall be deſtroyed, is ſhewn to be inconcluſive under Sect. XII; it follows, that his rule is overthrown,—that the above texts prove endleſs miſery.

Matt. xxvi. 24, Mark xiv. 21, have uſually been urged as affording deciſive evidence of the proper eternity of future puniſhment: for ſhould Judas be reſtored at any future period, and thenceforward enjoy

* Dialogues, p. 60.

enjoy endleſs happineſs, it will be good for him that he was born; contrary to the expreſs words of our Lord.

Mr. Wincheſter ſays, p. 78, "It was a common "proverb among the Jews, when any great misfor- "tune happened to a man or his family, to ſay, "Good were it for that man, if he had never been "born. And thus our Saviour uſed it with great "propriety reſpecting Judas: for who, that thinks "with any reaſon at all, would not have wiſhed that "he had never been born, rather than to have be- "trayed the dear Redeemer." Suppoſing it were "a common proverb among the Jews, when any "great misfortune happened to a man, to ſay, Good "were it for that man, if he had never been born," it does not follow that our Lord uſed theſe words in their ſenſe. They are not merely *a common proverb*, but *a Divine truth* when uttered by *Him*. Yet Mr. Vidler, in a note,* remarks,—"It becomes thoſe "who maintain the doctrine of endleſs miſery to con- "ſider how weak a foundation a common proverb is, "to ſupport ſuch a tremendous idea." Perhaps *Judas might* conſider theſe words in this light—as a *weak, common proverb*, which deſerved little or no attention!

Mr. W. aſks, "Who would not have wiſhed that "he had never been born, rather than to have be- "trayed the dear Redeemer?" But the "great miſ- "fortune" in this caſe did not happen to the be- trayer, but to the betrayed. Perhaps, however, Mr. W. refers to Judas's death. Yet what "great miſ- fortune" could Mr. W. ſee in this? If, as he ob- ſerves, Judas "periſhed, probably, by his own "hands," his death was his *ſin*, not his *misfortune*. If Mr. W. refers to his "great misfortune" of going to

* Dialogues, p. 87,

to hell, the balance of good and evil is no longer limited to this life; and if we extend it to futurity, it would not have been good for him to have never been born, if the doctrine of Univerſal Reſtoration be true; for the evil of the greateſt ſufferings for the longeſt limited period, bears no proportion to the good of the endleſs happineſs which follows.

Mr. V., however, ſuppoſes "Judas did *not* periſh by his own hands." He explains the matter thus: "Judas had ſeen the miracles of Jeſus, and was "highly impreſſed with a ſenſe of his power; he "had ſeen his modeſty and humility, and, like the "kinſmen of our Lord, could not reconcile his cha-"racter of Meſſiah with his low condition and love "of privacy, See John, vii. 3, 4. Might he not "think that if he could bring his Maſter into ſuch "circumſtances as ſhould cauſe him to avow his cha-"racter openly, and to take the kingdom, that he "ſhould even do a good work? That then he ſhould "not only be forgiven, but even highly rewarded, "as having ſhewn his love to Jeſus? The ſmallneſs "of the reward which he had from the rulers, ſeems "to ſhew, that he had hopes much beyond *that*. "That Judas did not think of any harm to his Maſ-"ter, is evident from Matt. xxvii. 3. I do not ſee "but that Judas loved his Maſter as really as Peter "and the other diſciples; but being more deeply "tinctured with ambition to poſſeſs the temporal ho-"nours of the kingdom, he fell more deeply than "they; and ſeeing the deſign of his plan fruſtrated, "and the life of his *beloved Maſter* in danger, he "made every reparation which a ſincere but miſtaken "man could make; he avowed the innocence of "Jeſus—confeſſed his own guilt—returned the mo-"ney with abhorrence—and, ſo great was his grief "that it ſtrangled him—he fell down on his face, and "his bowels guſhed out." *

What

* Dialogues, p. 82. Note.

What pains are here taken to waſh the Æthiop white! But it is all to no purpoſe. It is remarkable that, juſt after our Lord had pronounced the dreadful woe, it is added, "Then Judas, which betrayed Him, "anſwered and ſaid, Maſter, is it I?' He ſaid unto "him, Thou haſt ſaid." From this it appears very evident, that Judas had a faithful warning of the wickedneſs of betraying Chriſt, and of the fearful conſequences which would follow. How is it poſſible after this, that he could ſuppoſe "he ſhould even do a good "work?" or that "he ſhould not only be forgiven, "but even highly rewarded, as having ſhewn his love "to Jeſus?" And how can Mr. V. reconcile this faithful warning with his aſſertion, that Judas was "a ſincere but miſtaken man?" A ſincere but miſtaken man, is a man of pure principles who, through ignorance, errs in conduct. But it is impoſſible to apply this to Judas; for he went out from our Lord to the prieſts with this warning ſounding in his ears.

The ſmallneſs of the reward is conſidered as an argument againſt Judas's covetouſneſs. It might with propriety have been urged as a proof of his extreme depravity; but if he were diſintereſted, why ſhould he aſk a reward at all? Why enquire, What will ye give me? Is it a new thing in the earth for men to do a great deal of miſchief with the hope of but little gain? We have ſatisfactory proof of Judas's covetouſneſs in John xii 4—6.

But "Judas did not think of any harm to his "Maſter." Pſa. cix. 6—19, is a prediction reſpecting Judas, delivered in the form of an imprecation: See Acts i. 16, 20. Now, if we may believe this prediction as having been accompliſhed, Judas "PERSE-"CUTED *the poor and needy man*, that he might "even SLAY *the broken in heart*, Ver. 16."

Mr. V. thinks that "Judas loved his Maſter as "really as Peter and the other diſciples." He does

not, however, offer any proof of this ſtrange poſition. Inſtead of loving Chriſt, he is ſaid to have *loved curſing*, Pſa. cix. 17.

"That he is gone to hell," ſays Mr. V, "I can-"not learn from the Scriptures." * If you cannot learn this from Acts i. 20, you may from John xiii. 11.—xvii. 11, 12. A man that is *not clean*, and that is *loſt from Chriſt*, cannot ſurely be in heaven. Mr. V. thinks that his repentance was *evangelical*. But David propheſied of him, that his *prayer* would *become ſin*, and that when *judged*, he ſhould be *condemned*, Pſa. cix. 7. This account is perfectly irreconcilable with evangelical repentance.

But if Judas was as good a man as Mr. V. would have us to believe he was,—if the only defect in his character was a deeper taint of ambition than was common to the apoſtles,—and if he obtained, in this world, forgiveneſs of this ſin—it is demanded in the name of reaſon, In what ſenſe can it be true, that it would have been good for him if he had not been born? Shall we ſay, On account of his "fearful "end?" But what was there in his end ſo fearful? Death, occaſioned by the depth of *evangelical* repentance, is to be coveted rather than dreaded; for it ſecures a glorious immortality. Shall we ſay, On account of his *painful* end? The *pain* of ſuffocation could not be equal to the pain of crucifixion, which ſome of the Apoſtles ſuffered; would it not therefore have been ſtill more appropriate, if our Lord had addreſſed the words in queſtion to thoſe of the Apoſtles whom He foreſaw would be perſecuted to death? Shall we ſay, On account of his *diſgraceful* end? But is *evangelical* repentance *diſgraceful*? is it not, rather, *honourable*?

How curious it is to hear this *rational* divine talk about *evangelical* repentance occaſioning *death*! Jeſus ſaid

* Dialogues, p. 82, Note.

ſaid He came not into the world to *deſtroy men's* lives, and yet Mr. V. believes He preached an evangelical repentance which ſometimes, at leaſt, cauſes death. But did not our Lord underſtand the effects which His doctrines were likely to produce? A diſtinction is made between *godly ſorrow*, and the *ſorrow of the world*, in 2 Cor. vii. 9, 10; the former does *no damage*, it worketh repentance unto *ſalvation;* it is the latter which *worketh death.*

Mr. Wincheſter ſpends nearly four pages about Job and Jeremiah curſing the day of their birth, but he frankly acknowledges, p. 85, that they "uttered "ſuch raſh words as, in their cooler moments, they "repented of; and therefore what they ſpake of "themſelves cannot wholly" (no nor in part) "ſet "aſide the objection."

On Matt. xxiv. 19, Mark, xiii. 17, Luke, xxi. 23.—xxiii. 27—31, Mr. W. obſerves, p. 86, "Who "would not, a thouſand times, chooſe rather never "to have been born, than even to ſee, far leſs ex"perience, the miſeries which came upon Jeruſalem "and its inhabitants?" No man, in his ſober ſenſes, if the doctrine of Univerſal Reſtoration be true. But it is neither ſaid of the women, nor yet of the people of thoſe times, "It had been good for them "if they had not been born."

P. 86, "Solomon not only repreſents a ſtate of "great miſery and affliction in this life, as worſe than "not to have been born, but alſo a ſtate of the "greateſt proſperity, if it end in diſgrace, Eccles. "vi. 3—6." But do the words *untimely birth* ſignify the ſame as *not being born?* We might as well ſay that *premature light* means *darkneſs.*

Mr. W. grants that Mark ix. 43—49, "is cer"tainly a moſt terrible paſſage." He proceeds, p. 46,—"There is no doubt but Jeſus Chriſt had his "eye upon Iſa. lxvi. 24. This prophecy ſhall be

" fulfilled when the children of Iſrael ſhall return " and be ſettled in their own land. See Ezek. xxxix. " 4—12, Zech. xiv. 16, Iſa. lxvi. 21, Rev. xvii. " 14,—xix. 19." The *worm* is not once mentioned in any of theſe paſſages, and the *fire* only *once:* "They " ſet on fire and burn the weapons." But Iſaiah, chap lxvi. 24, is not ſpeaking about *weapons*, but *men:* "They ſhall look upon the carcaſes of the " *men* that have tranſgreſſed againſt me: for *their* " *worm* ſhall not die, neither ſhall *their fire* be " quenched." The prophet cannot allude to any earthly judgment, in theſe latter words, for no worm can *live* in a material fire.

To prove that the phraſe, *the fire that never ſhall be quenched*, does not mean that the fire ſhall be ſtrictly burning for ever, Mr. W. refers to the following paſſages, where ſimilar phraſes occur which muſt be underſtood with ſome limitation, Levit. vi. 13, Jer. xvii. 27, Ezek. xx. 45—48, Iſa. xxxiv. 9, 10. Mr. W. was aware, however, that it would be objected,—" Theſe fires were all on earth, and in time, " and therefore muſt have an end, or ceaſe to burn; " but the fire of hell is in eternity, and therefore " muſt laſt as long as eternity ſhall endure." To this he replies,—" Had thoſe *unquenchable* fires never " gone out while earth endured, or while time laſted, " there might have been ſome force in this argument; " but ſince the continuance of the fire does not de- " pend upon the *ſeaſon* in which it is kindled, but " upon the *combuſtibles* that feed and ſupport it, " this can be no objection."*

But I think it is an objection unanſwerable. It will be granted, I believe, that the fires, in the inſtances above alluded to, were not quenched, but went out when the combuſtible matter which fed them was ſpent; they therefore ſerve to prove, that the fire

* Dialogues, p. 51—55.

fire of hell will not be *quenched*, nor even *go out*, except the matter which feeds it ſhould all be conſumed. But that cannot be. The wrath of God which ſupports this dreadful fire will never be exhauſted. Rev. xv. 7, "And one of the four beaſts gave unto the "ſeven angels ſeven golden vials full of the wrath of "God, who liveth for ever and ever." Lampe obſerves upon this text,—"Why with the mentioning "of divine wrath, ſhould the deſcription of the Su"preme Being, as the God who *liveth* for ever and "ever be immediately ſubjoined? Where would be "the ſtrength of this repetition, unleſs to ſpecify an "illuſtrious example, in order to exhibit, in the "moſt expreſſive light, the tremendous wrath of "God? And if it reſpect him, is it not manifeſt, "that God will continue to prove his exiſtence as "living for ever and ever, even by the diſplaying of "his wrath? But how could that be demonſtrated "by the pouring out of the vials of his wrath, un"leſs that very threatening of wrath ſhould be pro"tracted for ever and ever?"* The perſons upon whom the fire acts will never be conſumed. This Mr. W. grants, p. 55. "As to the expreſſion," ſays he, "of being *ſalted with fire*, I think our Saviour in"tended to teach us that they ſhould not be *annihi*"*lated* by the fire, but preſerved therein." It remains, that the fire of hell will burn for ever.

It is true Mr. W. obſerves further, "I would alſo "propoſe, whether our Lord did not mean to inti"mate, that even the fire itſelf ſhall be of uſe, un"der his direction, to humble, ſubdue and penetrate "the ſtubborn and diſobedient rebels that ſhall be "caſt into it. *Fire*, as well as ſalt, is a great puri"fier; and preſerves and cleanſes thoſe things which "are able to endure it; and is the great agent by "which all metals are ſeparated from their droſs, "and prepared for the uſe for which they were de"ſigned,

* Diſſertation on Endleſs Puniſhment, p. 10, 11.

" ſigned, p. 55." According to this account, when the fire has penetrated, humbled, and ſubdued ſinners, it will die out; and they, like metals purified from droſs, will be taken out of the furnace. But hell-fire is uniformly repreſented as a *puniſhment*, without the leaſt intimation of its being a *purgatory*. Hell is twice called a furnace of fire; (Matt. xiii. 42, 50.) and the reaſon why it is ſo called is alſo mentioned. If therefore it were a purifying furnace, this was the proper time to explain it. But does our Lord ſay, " There ſhall ſinners be purified?" No ſuch thing: His words convey the idea of puniſhment: " There " ſhall be wailing and gnaſhing of teeth." The Scriptures repreſent ſome ſinners as incapable of being *purified*. It is impoſſible to renew them to repentance—they are rejected—they are good for nothing—they are caſt away; Heb. vi. 4—8, Matt. v. 13,—xiii. 48.

Mr. W. ſeems to have carefully avoided ſaying any thing about the *worm;* and no doubt for a wiſe reaſon—it would have rendered uſeleſs all his labour about the *fire*. For if the fire being termed *unquenchable*, do not hinder but that puniſhment may naturally come to an end, yet this concluſion is inadmiſſable when we conſider, that *their worm dieth not*. Take either of the phraſes ſeparately, and there is ſome room for cavil. *The fire never ſhall be quenched:* No, ſays the objector, no being ſhall put it out, but it may *die out of itſelf*. *Their worm dieth not:* No, ſays the objector again, the worm will not naturally die of itſelf, but it may be *killed*. But unite the two ideas, and the controverſy is ended: for that puniſhment which no being ſhall put an end to, and which will not naturally of itſelf come to an end, muſt neceſſarily be eternal.

Conference Office, North-Green, Worſhip-Street,
G. Story, Agent.

AN

ESSAY

ON

FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

BY R. WRIGHT.

We are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth.

PAUL.

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PREFACE.

FUTURE punishment is a subject of the most awful nature. Christians are still divided in their opinions respecting its duration: some think the future sufferings of the wicked will be endless; others suppose they will continue for an indefinite period, but not be absolutely endless. Both parties endeavour to support their opinions by scripture and reason. The reader should carefully examine and judge for himself. Either view of the subject is sufficiently terrible to alarm the consciences of sinners.

The doctrine of endless punishment has had many advocates. Leading men of different parties have stood forth in its defence. They have zealously contended that the wicked will be punished with eternal torments. Their defences of this tremendous hypothesis, have received suitable replies, and, one after another, they have retired from the field of controversy. On their side there seems no additional evidence to produce, no new arguments to advance. They seem to have exhausted their rhetoric and their proofs, without being able to refute their opponents. I feel the more convinced of this by the perusal of a recent publication on that side of the question, written by *Mr. D. Isaac*, a Methodist preacher.

Though Mr. I. professes to refute the arguments of several writers, who have pleaded for limited punishment, and to answer the various objections to the doctrine of endless misery, he has in reality stated nothing new, produced nothing in support of his hypothesis, nor used any reasoning against limited punishment, but what has before received examination.

and replication. Indeed Mr. I. seems more disposed to a play upon words, a display of ability in quirk and quibble, and an attempt to make those he has chosen as opponents appear ridiculous, than to the sober and impartial examination of the weighty subject on which he writes. His manner is ill suited to the solemnity of the subject on which he employs his pen. I know not how a man under the influence of truly christian feelings, can write on the future misery of his fellow creatures, without having his mind deeply solemnized by the subject, and feeling pained with the thought that so dreadful a fate awaits so many beings made like himself; but it seems some men can declaim, even on the subject of eternal torments, until it ceases to affect them. The most terrific images by becoming familiar cease to appear terrible. Had Mr. I. written in a different tone, and shown more of a disposition for the patient investigation of religious truth, it might have been proper to have replied to his book, though it contained nothing new.

If Mr. I. supposes that proving that some passages of scripture have been misapplied by Universalists, is proving the doctrine of endless punishment, he is greatly mistaken; the opposers of that doctrine found their objections, not so much on the interpretation of particular passages of scripture, as on what is admitted by all parties, respecting the character, perfections, and designs of God.

So far as Mr. I. has noticed what I have formerly written, I cannot perceive that his animadversions materially affect my arguments. I have no objection to controversy, believing that properly conducted it is favorable to the cause of truth; yet, I think, when it would be likely to gender unchristian strife it ought as much as possible to be avoided. It is presumed that the following essay, though not written as a reply to Mr. I. contains more than an answer to what it

would be proper to notice in writing a reply to his book.

The arguments in favor of limited punishment are far from being exhausted. The objections of our opponents may lead us to state the subject in a more correct and consistent manner: this is an advantage I hope we shall derive from opposition. In the following essay I have studied brevity, and endeavoured to compress a general view of the subject and arguments into as narrow a compass as possible. In the third chapter my object is to present the reader with a general view of the argument on all sides respecting the duration of punishment. In so short an essay much novelty cannot be expected; yet it is presumed it contains some things new, or at least which have not been before stated in any small publication: in particular, I think, it has not been sufficiently insisted on that the *onus probandi* lies with our opponents, and that on their failure of proof limited punishment follows as a natural consequence.

R. WRIGHT.

Wisbeach, February 18, 1808.

ESSAY

ON

FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

CHAP. I.

General Remarks on the Punishment of Sin.

God is the moral governor of the world. He governs mankind by fixed and general laws: for the fuller explication and enforcement of these laws, to the light of nature he hath superadded the doctrines and precepts of revelation. All the laws of God, and the sanctions attending them, have the moral good of the creation for their object. Human nature is so constituted that actions always proceed from motives, and produce painful or pleasurable effects corresponding to their nature. Such an indissoluble connexion is established between causes and effects in the moral world that no person can be vicious or commit sin with impunity. Sooner or later every offender against God must feel the bitter effects of his conduct, and every transgression receive its just recompence. This constitution of of things is calculated to promote the cure of moral evil, and the improvement of rational creatures. As man is ever seeking, and can never cease to desire happiness, an experience of the bitter effects of sin, producing a conviction that it is incompatible with happiness, cannot fail to promote his reformation, and

dispose him to choose that which is morally good; and God who is infinitely good, cannot fail to bestow on his creatures all the happiness their moral state qualifies them to enjoy.

§ 1. *The character of God, as moral Governor of the world, requires that sin should be punished.*

The end of moral government is moral good, consequently its operations must be directed against moral evil. As a moral governor God cannot be indifferent to the moral conduct of men: it is necessary he should place them under such laws as are calculated to promote order and happiness, that those laws should be enforced by penal sanctions, either expressed or implied, and that in case of transgression the penalty should be inflicted on the actual offender, according to the nature of the offence, so far as the supreme governor in his infinite wisdom may judge most fit and proper; for it would be arrogance to say, the absolute Sovereign of the universe has not a right to mitigate the penalties of his own laws, or to absolve offenders, when it can be done consistently with the wise and benevolent ends of his divine government: this however is certain, in punishing or pardoning, he will have an impartial regard to the moral state of the individual as well as the general good of the moral system, indeed the one involves the other, and that he will ever proceed, in every part of his moral government, according to the most perfect and unalterable laws, or the infinite rectitude of his own nature, which is in fact the same thing.

§ 2. The laws which God hath established in the moral world, render it impossible that any man should sin with impunity.

Man is endowed with rational and moral powers, which enable him to discern between good and evil. After attaining the use of reason, in whatever circumstances placed, he has some sense of duty, and when he acts contrary to it, pain of mind is to him unavoidable. Guilt, remorse, terror, and a sense of the displeasure of God, naturally follow the commission of what is perceived to be sinful. Though often by repeated transgression, through the deceitfulness of sin, the heart is hardened, or conscience benumbed by some fatal delusion, so that a high degree of insensibility is induced, still, a loss of the pleasures of innocence and conscious rectitude is sustained, a disqualification for virtuous enjoyment is contracted, and a moral disease, the dreadful effects of which must sooner or later be felt, continues to make a fatal progress in the whole mental frame of the sinner. Sin, in the proportion it is indulged in, hinders the growth of mind, deforms human nature, debases the character, and is every way injurious to a rational being. Many vices involve men in outward troubles, debilitate both body and mind, shorten life, and while it continues, produce miseries which are at length terminated in a premature grave. Evil passions, ungoverned appetites, and irregular desires, never fail to torment the breast that harbors and indulges them.

§ 3. Divine revelation describes sin and misery as inseparable, and shows the punishment of sin to be unavoidable by those who continue in it.

There is no peace to the wicked. Sin shall not go unpunished. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God: i. e. under the penalty of his violated

laws. Such are the declarations of scripture; and they approve themselves to reason and are manifestly agreeable to the fitness of things. All the holy prophets declared to the house of Israel the utter impossibility of their escaping misery and destruction in any other way than by reformation and obedience. In the sacred scriptures, all the terrors of the Lord are set in array against those who continue willfully to transgress. Even in the gospel, the righteous displeasure of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. The gospel promises no impunity, affords no hope of escaping punishment, to any who continue in the known practice of sin; on the contrary it cuts them off from all hope of escaping the wrath to come, declares that the kingdom of heaven shall be shut against them, and that the most fearful punishment will assuredly overtake them. To practical unbelievers, as well as to those who despitefully renounce the gospel, it leaves nothing but a fearful looking for of judgement, and fiery indignation, which will devour such adversaries of truth and righteousness.

§ 4. *The mercy of God will not interpose to prevent the punishment of those who continue wilful sinners.*

In that awful period when judgment will be executed on all the workers of iniquity, *he that made them will have no mercy on them, he that formed them will shew them no favor.* The Father of mercies hath passed no decree to give impunity to incorrigible offenders; on the contrary he hath declared their punishment irreversible. No system of favoritism exists under his government, by which one wilful transgressor shall be screened from punishment any more than another; *for God is no respecter of persons.* Divine mercy can never operate contrary to the inte-

rests of holiness, or the moral good of the creation or of any part of it. It is a fatal delusion for men to suppose they shall be saved on the ground of God's absolute decrees in their favor, or of his partial love, or discriminating mercy to them, while they continue unholy. Such suppositions while they delude and lead on to destruction those who entertain them, libel the character of the governor of the universe, transform the immortal parent of mankind into an arbitrary despot, and involve the absurd and wicked imagination, that he is a partial being, who, from a doating fondness to a part of his creatures, and those the most unworthy, relinquishes eternal rectitude, and the moral good of the creation.

§ 5. *What Christ hath done and suffered will not save any from punishment who continue in sin.*

Christ did not come to be the minister of sin, nor to furnish men with a cloak for their sins; but to be the minister of righteousness, and to make sinners personally righteous by his gospel. To suppose that what he hath done and suffered will procure our final acceptance with God, without our becoming personally righteous, is evidently to make him the minister of sin. To suppose that Christ was righteous in our stead, that he suffered the punishment due to our sins, that his personal righteousness is placed to our account to supply our want of personal righteousness, and that his sufferings will exonerate us from the penal consequences of our sins, is to strike a blow at the root of the moral system, and to represent him as coming that we might have a cloak for our sins. Most certain it is that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God, that, notwithstanding all that Christ hath done, there will be indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth

evil, and that the Savior under whose righteousness immoral professors of his name think to shelter themselves, will pronounce their condemnation.

§ 6. *What is falsely called repentance and conversion, consisting merely in violent agitation and terror, followed by extravagant emotions of rapturous joy, unattended by any real moral change, will not save sinners from punishment.*

Frames and emotions, either painful or pleasurable, contribute not to our salvation any farther than they produce a real change of heart and life. No repentance but what includes reformation, no conversion but what comprehends a turning to an habitual course of righteousness, can free us from an exposure to punishment. There can be no substitute for personal righteousness. No faith, no religious feelings, no outward form of godliness, no devotional exercises, nor any other thing, if we do not depart from iniquity, and pursue an habitual course of obedience to the will of God, can save us from the wrath to come. *The judgement of God is according to truth*, we must receive according to our moral state, our real temper and conduct, as they appear in his sight. How long will the professors of the gospel deceive themselves by relying on faith alone, or on what they wrongly call experience, while justice, mercy and fidelity are neglected; let them know that nothing but real and personal holiness, holiness of heart and life, can preserve them from misery and destruction.

§ 7. *The moral good of the creation requires that sin should be punished.*

If the wicked enjoyed true peace, if the workers of iniquity were truly happy, if sin involved no painful effects, if it subjected the transgressor to no real loss,

no positive injury, and if God in no way punished those who rebel against him, rational creatures would feel no interest in pursuing a virtuous course, and in seeking the attainment of moral excellency, one of the most powerful motives to right action would be destroyed: in fact, all actions would be indifferent, at least so far as the advantage of the actor is concerned; virtue would be robbed of that which gives it such a decided preference, its constant tendency to happiness. From the consideration, that God cannot fail to seek the general good of the moral system, it follows, that it is impossible he should fail to punish wilful sinners, seeing the good of the moral system requires that vice should be rendered odious and abhorrent to the feelings of rational creatures, by having the most painful effects connected with it, and by its being marked with the highest displeasure of the supreme governor. Nor need we suppose God to be vindictive, or revengeful, in order to support these sentiments; for viewing his justice to be, as it certainly is, a modification of his goodness, infinitely remote from a principle of revenge, still it is an act of justice, an act truly benevolent, to punish sin, when the good of the moral system requires it.

§ 8. *The welfare of the wilful offender requires that he should be punished.*

We are not reduced to the sad dilemma of saying, God must sacrifice the good of individuals to secure the general good of his creatures, for a being of infinite wisdom and power never can be at a loss to combine both objects. Some men will not be instructed but by a painful discipline, they will not learn the evil of sin, but from an experience of its dreadful effects; such persons cannot be improved without being punished. It certainly is good in God to

ubject such incorrigible offenders to severe punish-
ent, and, as he is always infinitely good, his punitive
ustice in its most terrible operations, ought still to be
iewed as a modification of his goodness. The con-
ideration that no good can be done for him in a mo-
al sense, while he pursues his present course, without
is being subjected to the terrible punishment threa-
ened against such characters, cuts the daring trans-
ressor off from the vain confidence he entertains that
God is too good to inflict such terrible punishment;
or goodness as well as justice, requires its infliction.
Under no view has the sinner any thing to hope, but
very thing to fear, so long as he pursues his present
vil course.

§ 9. *Punishment is a part of that discipline which God hath appointed for the improvement of mankind.*

Without entering into the question respecting the origin and long continuance of evil, under the divine government, I may be allowed to say, a being who is infinitely wise, powerful and good, and such a being God unquestionably is, cannot cease to design the good of his rational creatures, nor can it reasonably be supposed he hath ever suffered any thing to take place but what he will make subservient to their good. He hath placed man, though ever dependent on him, and under his controul, in the present state and scene of things, for the free developement of his powers, and the gradual acquisition of mind; he hath appointed him to be the pupil of experience, to gain knowledge from practice, to be led on from one degree of moral excellence to another, until he be conducted to a confirmed state of virtue and happiness. An essential part of this divine plan is that man should learn to hate sin from observing or feeling its bitter effects, and to love virtue from

a sense of its necessity and happy tendency. In this view the punishment of sin has an important end to answer under the divine government.

CHAP. II.

On Future Punishment.

HAD we no knowledge of a life to come, it would be our best interest to be virtuous, and the greatest folly to be vicious; seeing there can be no real happiness but in a virtuous course, and vice is always productive of misery; yet as a future existence is assured to us by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, vice and virtue are to be regarded, especially in reference to their effects in a future state, the influence they will have on our happiness or misery hereafter. God hath placed such glorious and alarming subjects before us, in his word, as are calculated to operate upon our hopes and fears, to bring our passions under the most powerful restraint, to prove the most powerful check to the vicious in their iniquitous career, to soothe the righteous under all their trials and sufferings, and to stimulate to the diligent cultivation and practice of virtue. In order to these momentous subjects properly affecting our minds it is necessary they should be brought into view in a true scriptural light. The future alarming consequences of a life spent in iniquity come under consideration in this chapter.

§. 1. *The future punishment of impenitent sinners is agreeable to reason.*

If the scriptures only revealed a future life, and were entirely silent respecting the happy or miserable state of men hereafter, it would be reasonable to con-

clude that those who die sinful will be miserable when raised from the dead; for the mere circumstances of dying and being raised to life can make no change in their moral state; they must rise as sinful, as guilty, as much exposed to the bitter fruits of sin, as they died: unless the laws established in the moral world were dissolved, and the nature of things totally changed, this must unavoidably be the case. It is impossible the wicked should be raised to the enjoyment of happiness, because their moral state renders them incapable of it. The nature and fitness of things require, that those who have fitted themselves only for misery should be miserable. As sinners, in many instances, escape some of the bitter effects of sin here, and become insensible to the evil of their conduct, the good of the moral system requires that they should be punished hereafter. The rectitude of the divine government requires the future punishment of wilful transgressors. The judgments of God inflicted in the present state, the painful effects of sin now, as well as the fears of the guilty mind, furnish an awful presage of what the sinner has to expect hereafter.

§ 2. *Future Punishment is plainly revealed in the sacred Scriptures.*

Though when a future state is believed, the future punishment of the wicked is highly probable on the ground of reason merely, like every other thing which belongs to a life to come, it can be made certain only by divine revelation. All our views of it should be derived from the scriptures, carefully examined and rationally explained. We should conclude nothing merely on the ground of tradition, received opinions, or popular expositions; but, where so much that is awful is involved, examine closely, and, with the utmost deliberation, judge for ourselves. Such une-

quivocal declarations as the following, pointing to a future state, so clearly shew that there will be a retribution hereafter, as to carry conviction to every sincere and impartial enquirer after truth. *All that are in their graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation. God will render to every man according to his deeds. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* However divided Christians may be in their opinions, respecting the nature and duration of future punishment, they all, except those who, departing from the plain letter of scripture, explain every thing mystically, fully admit that future punishment is a doctrine of scripture.

§ 3. *The Wicked dead are not now in a State of Punishment.*

Without entering into the question respecting a separate state of existence between death and the resurrection, I may be permitted to say the scriptures do not teach, that the wicked will be punished before they are raised from the dead. In whatever way future judgment is explained, it must be admitted that the dead are never said to be judged before they are raised again to life. To suppose the wicked dead are now in a state of punishment, involves the manifest absurdity, that they are punished first and judged afterwards, which would render future judgment, so far as relates to them, a mere farce; for their state would be declared and decided long before the arrival of the period of judgment. The scriptures teach that the ungodly are reserved to the day of judgment to be punished, not that they are now in a state of pu-

nishment. It belongs to those who oppose what I am stating to prove the contrary, not to me to prove a negative. I know of but one place in scripture that can be brought to support what I oppose, *i. e.* the account of the rich man and Lazarus, which seems to be a parable, and cannot be construed literally; for it represents the persons spoken of as having bodily organs, but none will contend that disembodied spirits have bodily organs; and it would be wrong to construe a parable in a sense inconsistent with the general tenor of scripture. The parable in question seems constructed according to Jewish ideas, as may be seen by comparing it with Josephus' discourse to the Greeks concerning *Hades*. Jesus seems to have used the *argumentum ad hominem*, to shew the Jews that, if they believed not Moses and the prophets, they would not be converted though one rose from the dead.

§ 4. *The future Punishment of the Wicked will commence at their resurrection from the Dead.*

The resurrection of men includes a revival of their former consciousness; for such consciousness is essential to personal identity. If not raised in the same moral state in which they died, viewed as the subjects of moral government, they would not be the same persons. The wicked, being raised from the dead in the same state of guilt and depravity as they died, must become truly miserable in passing through a declarative judgment, by which the secrets of all hearts will be revealed, every hidden thing be made manifest, and every character and action be exposed to view in its true light. The means of gratifying their sensual desires and lascivious passions, of dissipating thought and reflection, of stupifying their consciences, of concealing their real character, being totally removed, they must be extremely wretched;

as nothing will remain for them but guilt, horror, shame, and anguish. They will come forth to the resurrection of condemnation, be raised to shame and everlasting contempt. Could we look no farther into this awful subject it would be truly alarming, and ought to appal the stoutest hearted sinner.

§ 5. We have no reason to suppose that God has created a World that is merely a Scene and Habitation of Misery.

In all the works of God with which we are acquainted goodness appears, and a tendency to produce and promote happiness is manifest. It is inconsistent with all that appears of God in the visible creation to suppose he hath any where created a mere hell, according to the popular notion of hell. If indeed the scripture reveals the existence of such a world, we are bound to believe it exists; but it belongs to those who think that is the case to prove it. The Hebrew word *sheol*, translated hell in the Old Testament, signifies the receptacle of the dead, a place out of sight, the grave, and gives no countenance to the popular idea of hell. The same may be said of the Greek word *hades*, rendered hell in the New Testament. Neither of these terms bears the least relation to a world of misery distinct and remote from this earth. *Gehenna*, another word which occurs a few times in the New Testament, and is translated hell, means literally the valley of *Hinnom*, which was near to Jerusalem; if construed figuratively, it is impossible the term should be expressive of a world in some other part of space, such as the modern notion of hell supposes, though it may indicate a dreadful state of misery. The word *Tartarus*, which occurs once in the New Testament, and is rendered hell, cannot refer to a world distinct from this; for the *Tartarus* of the Greeks was supposed to be within this earth. The

modern notion of hell seems to be an improvement on heathen fictions, with which it is probable some of the latter Jews symbolized. The popular notion of hell, as a world distinct from this earth, is not only without any foundation in scripture, but was unknown to the ancient Jews and Heathens; for the hell of the ancient world was supposed to be within this earth.

§ 6. *The wicked, when raised from the dead, will be punished upon this earth.*

All the scenes described in the scriptures both past and to come, all the events foretold there, relate to this earth and its inhabitants. We have no intimation in scripture that the wicked, when raised from the dead, will be removed to some other world, situated no one knows where. It belongs not to me to prove that they will not, the *onus probandi* lies with those who contend that they will, be removed to a distant world to be tormented; for, as it must be matter of pure revelation, if the affirmative cannot be supported by scripture, the negative must follow of course. It is on this earth we are taught to expect Jesus will act in the character of judge, and execute judgment on the workers of iniquity. According to the scriptures it is here they will receive their judgment and perdition. The alarming imagery by which their punishment is described, and the whole of the terrific scene, is placed upon this earth. I repeat, the scriptures are entirely silent respecting the wicked being carried to some distant world of misery, to have their dread sentence executed upon them. It is certainly most agreeable to reason, to suppose, that, as men, who have sinned upon this earth, they will receive their punishment for the good of the moral system, among creatures like themselves. There is no ground for imagining, as some writers have done, that they will suffer as examples to the in-

habitants of other worlds, with whom they have had no connexion, and who may possess a very different nature.

§ 7. *Christ is appointed of God to execute judgment on the wicked.*

It is not necessary in this place to enquire in what way God will judge the world by Jesus Christ; it is sufficient for the present purpose to observe that the scriptures plainly teach that he will do it, that he hath committed all judgment to him, and given him authority to execute it. Some christians seem to think that the devil, who makes so conspicuous a figure in some popular systems of theology, is a kind of jailor, and will hereafter be a kind of executioner, in the imagined world of misery, to torment the wicked, whom he hath seduced and led on in rebellion against God; but such are unscriptural conceits and vain imaginations. In divine revelation the work of executing judgment is ascribed to Christ, as committed to him by the Father, and he certainly will neither need, nor employ the devil to be his agent in any part of the important and awful business. The ministrations of Christ will accomplish all the good pleasure of Jehovah, whether it be in works of mercy or of judgment, so far as agency is necessary.

§ 8. *The loss the wicked will hereafter sustain will be no inconsiderable punishment.*

They will be excluded from the kingdom of God, the heavenly state to which the righteous will be raised. While the faithful followers of Jesus are glorified with him, enter into the joy of their Lord, reign with him in life, and with him inherit all things, the wicked will be excluded from all this honor, glory and felicity, and sink down into a state of darkness,

condemnation and misery. How great the contrast they will then perceive between those who have feared God and wrought righteousness, and themselves, who have delighted in iniquity! What extreme folly and madness it would be, if sin produced no painful effects in this life, to risk the awful displeasure of God, to forfeit the happiness and glory of the heavenly state, and incur future condemnation and misery, merely for the sake, at most, of a few years unlawful indulgence and sinful gratification! Oh that men were wise, that they would consider, and lay these things to heart!

§ 9. *The future punishment of the wicked is described by the most alarming imagery.*

The imagery made use of in scripture to describe the future punishment of the wicked, is most dreadful and terrific. Weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth; a worm that dieth not, and fire that is not quenched; a lake burning with fire and brimstone; devouring flames and incessant tortures; indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish; such awful language must convey the most dreadful ideas of suffering, and such is the language, the terrifying imagery, employed by the sacred penmen to represent the miseries which await impenitent sinners hereafter: Their overwhelming condemnation, unalleviated sufferings, and incessant misery, described by such alarming figures, involve a fearful obscurity; as the most terrible imagery is used to describe their punishment, it is impossible to tell how terrible that punishment may be; and, as its duration is utterly unknown to mortals, it extends into an unexplored futurity, loses itself in impenetrable darkness, and blackness of darkness hangs over the miserable sufferers for an undefined duration. This fearful obscurity,

which involves the subject, renders it the more terrible; and is calculated to excite the most dreadful apprehensions in the guilty mind.

CHAP. III.

On the duration of future punishment.

It is a common opinion among christians that the punishment of sinners will be of endless duration. A notion so difficult to reconcile with the known character and perfections of God, especially with his infinite goodness and mercy, ought not to be admitted merely on the ground of a few figurative expressions, and detached passages of scripture, as it requires the most clear and indubitable proof. A second opinion among christians is, that after the wicked have suffered for a time, in a future state, they will be utterly destroyed, and endlessly cease to be. There is yet another opinion, which obtains credit with many in the present day, it is, that the future punishment of the wicked will be limited and corrective; that though their sufferings will have no intermission, but continue incessant, for a hidden or undefined period, they will finally terminate in their recovery to purity and happiness. It is proposed, in this chapter, briefly to examine the evidence by which these different opinions are supported. Let us impartially examine the momentous points, exercise our reason in judging of the sense of scripture, and without fear, follow truth wherever it may lead us, fully satisfied that it never was, that it never can be productive of any injurious effects.

§ 1. *An enquiry whether the future punishment of the wicked will be absolutely endless, i. e. an endless life in torments.*

As all our knowledge respecting a future state must be derived from divine revelation, whatever men assert respecting future punishment they are bound to prove from the scriptures; the work of proving that it will be endless belongs to those who assert that tremendous doctrine, not to their opponents to prove a negative; if they fail in the production of sufficient proof a contrary doctrine must follow of course: nor ought it to be believed that a large portion of rational creatures will be endlessly tormented, without the clearest proof. What has been urged in support of the doctrine of endless misery may be brought into a narrow compass: it is summarily comprehended in the following particulars.

1. Those passages of scripture which speak of the exclusion of the wicked from the kingdom of God, from the happiness and glory to which the saints will be raised.

2. Those passages in which the word *everlasting* is connected with future punishment, as where it is said that the wicked will be sentenced to depart into everlasting fire, that they shall go away into everlasting punishment, that they will be punished with everlasting destruction, and that the smoke of their torment will ascend up day and night for ever and ever.

3. The passages in which it is said, that in hell their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched, and that the fire is unquenchable.

4. What is said of the case of Judas, and of those who blaspheme against the Holy Spirit.

5. That no change can take place in the state of sinners after this life.

To invalidate the arguments used in support of the doctrine of eternal torments it will be said,

1. That they are founded on detached and figurative passages of scripture, which will admit of a different meaning, and, when taken in their connexion, and compared with other parts of the sacred writings, will not be found to authorize the conclusion made from them. That no clear, unequivocal, passage of scripture either is, or can be produced to prove that the wicked will be endlessly preserved alive in misery.

2. That it is equally admitted on all sides that the wicked will be excluded from the kingdom of God, from the happiness and glory to which the saints will be raised; but that it by no means follows that they will never be restored to a lower degree of enjoyment, much less that they will be tormented as long as God himself exists.

3. That the words everlasting, and for ever and ever, as used in the scriptures, by no means necessarily mean that the things to which they are applied will be endless; for those terms are, in the Old Testament, applied to things which have had an end, and, in the New Testament, to things which will have an end, as, to the kingdom of Christ, which he will deliver up to the Father, and to his priesthood, which no one supposes will be endless.

4. That some of the strongest passages urged in support of the doctrine of endless punishment do not unequivocally relate to the punishment of men after they are raised from the dead. That Matt. xxv. 31, to 46, relates to the judgment Christ will declare and execute upon the nations, found on the earth at his coming, and does not relate to men after they are raised from the dead; that in the whole account no mention is made of the resurrection, and that when raised from the dead men will not exist in a national form, so as to need being separated the good from the bad, but, be found in two vast bodies, the righteous and the wicked. That in 2 Thess. i. 9. no mention

being made in the context of the wicked dead being raised at that time, the Apostle is most likely speaking of the wicked who will be found alive on the earth at the coming of Christ. That the passage in the Apocalypse, which speaks of the beast and false prophet being tormented day and night for ever and ever, furnishes no proof that the wicked dead when raised will be consigned to endless torments; for no one will contend that the beast and false prophet are persons raised from the dead; besides, the contents of the Apocalypse are too symbolical for its peculiar phraseology to admit of a rigid literal construction.

5. It will be further said, that the words everlasting, for ever, &c. as connected with future punishment, and various other things in scriptures properly mean a hidden period, during which the things spoken of will be perpetual, and that it best agrees with the awful obscurity in which the future state of the wicked is left, to suppose their punishment will be perpetual during a hidden or undefined period.

6. That its being said, Mark ix. 46. *Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched,* by no means proves that the wicked will be fuel to the fire, and a prey to the worm as long as God exists; for as the language is evidently figurative, Christ in using it might not refer to a future state, but to the confusion and misery which would be produced among his disciples and in their minds, like a fire among them, and a worm within them, if they did not practise self denial. Precisely the same forms of expression are applied to the destruction of the carcases of men; Isa. lxvi. 24. but mere carcases cannot be supposed to suffer endless torments. Apply the passage to future punishment to which it is strictly applicable, and what it teaches is that the misery of the wicked will know no intermission so long as their punishment continues. As to the fire being called unquenchable, we

find similar and equally strong expressions in the Old Testament, to describe the judgements of God which come upon wicked cities and countries, to show that no mortal arm should be able to arrest their progress; yet those judgments have long since ceased to operate, having accomplished the end designed.

7. To what is said of the case of Judas, and of those who blaspheme against the Holy Spirit, will be replied that such very singular cases ought not to be brought into argument in reference to the duration of the punishment of all the wicked, as they are manifestly inapplicable. The words of Christ respecting Judas, *Good had it been for that man if he had not been born*, were probably repeated by him as a Jewish proverbial saying, to express the anguish he would feel, and his untimely end, after he had betrayed his master. That the words were a proverbial saying among the Jews, some reputed orthodox writers have admitted. There must be a paucity of proof, when the particular application of a proverbial saying, is brought to support so tremendous a doctrine as that of eternal torments. The account of those who blaspheme against the Holy Spirit, affords not clear proof that the Jews who committed that sin will be tormented to all eternity; if punished both in this world and the next it is all the words clearly express; it may be said in that case, according to the scripture sense of the word forgiveness, they have no forgiveness, as they suffer the whole punishment threatened, though it should terminate their existence, or mercy should afterwards be shown them.

8. In reply to the assertion, that the moral state of sinners will be unchangeable after the present life, it will be said that no such thing is expressed in the scriptures, and as there is nothing, either in the nature of man, or in the character of God, to render a future change in their moral state impossible, it is a mere

unfounded assertion, and can be of no weight in argument.

9. The advocates for the future total destruction of the wicked will say, that to describe the punishment which in scripture is called destruction, death, the second death, &c. as an endless life in torments is manifestly absurd.

10. It will be farther argued, that, as particular passages of scripture, especially such as are capable of being variously explained, ought to be construed in such a sense as best agrees with the revealed character and perfections of God, and the plain declarations of his mercy, it is impossible the doctrine of eternal torments should be taught in the passages quoted to support it; because it cannot be reconciled with the revealed character of God, nor with many plain and positive declarations of his word.

It is submitted to the reader, after he has weighed the whole of the preceding remarks, whether the advocates for the doctrine of eternal torments do not fail in their proofs; and, if that be the case, it necessarily follows that, either the wicked will be annihilated or ultimately restored to purity and happiness.

§ 2. *An enquiry whether the wicked will be annihilated, or so destroyed as always to cease to be.*

Here again the work of proving belongs to those who assert the affirmative; if they cannot produce sufficient evidence to substantiate their opinion it falls of course, and the contrary follows as the only remaining hypothesis. The arguments in support of the scheme of endless destruction may be summarily stated as follows:

1. The scriptures teach that the wages of sin is death, and it is most natural to conclude that those who are punished hereafter will receive the proper wages of sin.

2. Eternal life is promised to the righteous, it is, throughout the gospel, connected with obedience; it follows that the wicked will not obtain eternal life; for if they are to obtain it why is it promised to the righteous, in distinction from the wicked, and connected with obedience. Besides it is said, he that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. But if the wicked do not obtain eternal life they must perish everlastingly.

3. The scriptures plainly teach that the wicked shall perish, that they shall reap corruption, that their lot will be perdition, their end destruction, that they shall be punished with everlasting destruction, that Christ will say these mine enemies, that would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me.

4. The wicked are compared to chaff which shall be burnt up with unquenchable fire, to tares which will be bound in bundles to be burned; such metaphors convey the idea of utter destruction.

5. The future punishment of sinners is called the second death, and it is manifestly absurd to suppose they will suffer this death and yet continue to live.

6. In a state of perdition, destruction and death, the scriptures leave the wicked; hence it may be concluded they will eternally remain in that state.

To the arguments of the advocates for the doctrine of endless destruction it will be replied,

1. That the wages of sin undoubtedly is death, and that it is natural to infer that those who continue in sin will receive its proper wages; but that the word death is used figuratively, as well as literally, in the scriptures, and that, if the word be taken literally, it by no means follows that those who die will eternally remain dead; for it is admitted, on all sides, that multitudes who have been cut off for their sins will be raised again to life, even though no promise of life was

made to them, and if this be the case in some instances it may be so in all, unless the contrary be plainly expressed in scripture.

2. That the word 'life' is often used, in the sacred writings, to express, not merely being, but enjoyment or happiness. That eternal life was not promised under the law, that it was not given by Moses, but is God's peculiar gift by Jesus Christ in the gospel; yet it is not supposed that those who lived before the coming of Christ will eternally remain in the state of the dead. Those who believe and obey the gospel are said to have everlasting life; they enjoy the knowledge, the promise, and the hope of it, from which the unbelieving and disobedient are excluded. That when the wicked are raised from the dead, they will find themselves excluded from the life of happiness and glory to which the saints will be raised, and be subjected to the second death; and that these things are sufficient to enable us to account for the manner in which eternal life is spoken of, in reference to the righteous. That John iii. 36. relates to the present state, not to the future punishment, of unbelievers; that as long as they continue in unbelief, they cannot see the life which the gospel reveals, but remain under condemnation; from which state those who believe are delivered.

3. That it does not follow, because the wicked will perish, reap corruption, &c. that therefore they will eternally remain in that state; for it must be granted that many have perished, reaped corruption, &c. who will be raised again to life. That perdition and destruction do not necessarily imply endless loss of being; for Judas is called the son of perdition in reference to his untimely fate; nor is it certain that the perdition of ungodly men, mentioned 2 Pet. iii. 7. means any thing more than their destruction in the

present state, by the awful judgments of heaven, before, or at the coming of Christ: and multitudes of men have been destroyed who will be restored again to life. That as to its being said their end is destruction, the destruction of the antedeluvians is called their end, and it was said, *the end of all flesh is come*, yet who doubts of their future resurrection? As to the phrase, *everlasting destruction*, it has been shewn already that the passage where it occurs does not unequivocally relate to punishment in a future state, and that if it did, the word everlasting does not necessarily mean endless. The phrase *utter destruction*, and other expressions as strong as any in the New Testament relative to the future destruction of the wicked, occur in the Old Testament, and are applied to the destruction of the nations of Canaan, and other sinners; yet none doubt the resurrection of these latter. The words, *these mine enemies, &c. bring hither and slay them before me*, being part of a parable, ought not to be construed literally, at least no doctrine can be built upon them; they can only teach that sinners against the gospel shall be cut off, or severely punished.

4. It will be farther said, that the passage, Matth. iii. 12. in which the wicked are compared to chaff, which shall be burnt with unquenchable fire, relates not to a future state; but to the destruction of the wicked Jews: the Jewish church, in which Christ exercised his ministry, is the floor spoken of, and the unquenchable fire, those awful judgments by which the chaff of that nation would be destroyed: yet who doubts of the restoration of those wicked Jews to life? The parable of the tares describes a similar destruction of the sinners of the Christian world; but if the former implies not endless loss of being, the latter involves no such implication.

5. That in the Apocalypse, the future punishment

of sinners being called the second death, as it is not said *that* death will be the endless state of those who suffer it, by no means authorizes the conclusion that the wicked will eternally cease to be; besides it is said, in the same book, that a time will come when there shall be no more death; it is not said no more persons shall die, but there shall be no more death; yet while any remain dead, death remains, it still holds its power over them; how can death cease to be but by the universal prevalence of life? It is quite immaterial to the present argument, whether death be understood literally or figuratively; death cannot be destroyed, and cease to be, but by the universal prevalence of its opposite, life; for what is death but the absence of life, either in a literal or figurative sense, according as the term death is used?

6. It is not quite certain that the scriptures leave the wicked in a state of perdition, destruction, and death, seeing they declare that death itself shall be destroyed, and a time come when it shall cease to be. If an enemy, who has made many captives, be destroyed, it is a natural inference that he can no longer retain his captives. But if the scriptures did so leave the wicked, it would not follow that we could be certain they would eternally remain in that state, unless that also was revealed, which is not the case.

7. It will be further argued, that as the advocates for endless destruction will not admit that God ever made any man for misery, it is impossible they should reconcile with their own views of the goodness of God, the supposition that he will bring multitudes of his creatures from the silent region of the grave, into a new state of existence, merely that they may suffer misery for a time, and then sink into nothing; for where is the essential difference between creating them at first, merely for misery, and bringing them again into life,

after they were insensible in the dust, merely to be miserable?

It is now submitted to the reader, after weighing the above reasonings, whether the advocates for the scheme of endless destruction do not fail in the proof of their hypothesis; if they really do, nothing remains but the doctrine of limited and corrective punishment.

§ 3. *An enquiry whether future punishment will be limited and corrective.*

Those who contend that future punishment will be limited do not pretend to a knowledge of its limits; they suppose the subject to be involved in such awful obscurity that the impenitent sinner has every thing to fear, he knows neither how much, nor how long, he may have to suffer: of this he may be sure, that by adding sin to sin he is heaping up wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. In contending that punishment will be corrective, they do not mean that it will not be a real and dreadful punishment, only that in the end it will produce the moral improvement of the punished.

Far from wishing to weaken the restraints imposed on the vicious, they think, the apprehension of punishment proportioned to the evil deeds of the sinner will be most effectual in restraining him from pursuing his evil courses. They are concerned for the honor of God, whose justice and goodness they think dishonored by the notion of vindictive and endless punishment: and for the credit of divine revelation, which they fear is weakened, by sentiments revolting to reason and the best feelings of the human heart, being maintained as doctrines taught in the holy scriptures.

It is not, now, contended that the final restitution

of all mankind is so clearly revealed in the scriptures as to be capable of being supported otherwise than by inference and deduction; nor that it ought to be maintained as a leading or fundamental doctrine of christianity. It is presumed to be a fair deduction from the character and known perfections of God, and from various declarations in the sacred writings, and that it is capable of being supported by just reasoning and fair inference: on this ground its advocates are willing to rest it. Every part of truth is not made known with equal clearness, nor supported by proof equally direct, many things are believed among all parties of christians, which can be supported only by inference and deduction, though not as truths of the first class, and why should not the doctrine of the universal restoration be admitted on the same ground, especially when it is found that the arguments in its favor are so perfectly consistent with the character and perfections of the Deity?

As the *onus probandi* lies with the advocates for endless misery and endless destruction, if they fail to produce clear and decisive proof, the advocate for limited and corrective punishment has, in fact, nothing to prove, the doctrine for which he contends follows as a necessary consequence; for if endless punishment be not the doctrine of divine revelation, the punishment threatened there must be limited. If it be said the doctrine of endless punishment seems to be stated in some passages in the New Testament, it may also be said, so does the doctrine of transubstantiation, and if reason is to be employed in explaining the passages which are supposed to teach the latter, why not also in explaining those which are supposed to teach the former? The most indubitable proof is necessary to induce a belief of endless punishment, because it is a doctrine seemingly repugnant to reason and the known perfections of God. That such clear and unequivocal

proof has not been, neither can be produced, is pretty evident: on this ground merely the limited, corrective punishment, and final restoration of the wicked, is attended with high probability.

If it be asked why inferences and deductions may not be admitted as a sufficient ground for the belief of endless punishment, but the most direct proof is required, while inferences and deductions are deemed a sufficient ground for the admission of the final restoration; it is replied, that the inferences in the one case arise from very different premises to what they do in the other; in the former case they arise from a few detached passages of scripture, from phrases which are capable of being differently explained; in the latter they flow from what is admitted on all sides respecting the divine character and perfections; in the former case they seem to militate against the goodness, mercy, and even justice of God; in the latter they are in unison with every divine attribute.

The advocates for limited punishment are under no necessity of departing from the plain meaning of scripture terms; it is of no consequence to their leading arguments in how literal a sense the words 'perish, perdition, destruction, and death,' are applied to future punishment: and they ask for no more latitude in explaining the terms, 'for ever, everlasting, &c.' than is allowed in explaining the same words in other parts of scripture, where they are admitted by all christians to express a limited duration.

The following is a summary view of the leading arguments in support of the doctrine of limited and corrective punishment.

1. Endless punishment must either be unjust, or it must cease to be any punishment at all; for as there is no proportion between the present short life and eternity, there can be no proportion between an eternity of misery and the sins of this short life; yet

punishment to be just must be proportioned to the crimes punished; but if the punishment be proportioned to the sins of the present life, which the sacred scriptures plainly teach will be the case, and the infliction of it be endlessly extended, it must be divided into such an infinity of parts, that the part inflicted in any given period will be as nothing, consequently it will cease to deserve the name of punishment.

2. The scriptures plainly teach that there will be degrees of punishment in a future state, that every one will receive according to his deeds, that some will be beaten with many stripes, some with few stripes; not the terms light and heavy, but many and few, are used, which, however figurative the language, convey the idea that the duration of suffering will not be the same to all who are punished; but if all be punished with endless misery, or with endless destruction, all degrees in punishment will be destroyed; for endless misery, and endless destruction are each of them the same thing, whether inflicted as a punishment for one, or for a million crimes.

3. As God is infinitely good it is unreasonable to suppose he would have brought into being rational creatures when he knew they would, after a few years feverish existence, become completely miserable, and either eternally remain so, or only terminate their misery in endless loss of being: and it is impossible that a being who is infinitely good should totally abandon his rational offspring, much less keep them alive in torments as long as he himself exists.

4. God created all things for his own glory, being infinitely good he could not make any rational creature without intending his happiness, and he can neither want will nor power to carry that intention into effect in due time; but the annihilation, or endless torments, of sinners, can no more glorify God than answer the benevolent end of their creation. If it be

asked if such be God's intention why are not all made happy now? It is answered, it might with equal propriety be asked, why did not God fill the earth at once? why is not man born in the full maturity of his powers? why was not Christ raised up and sent in the first age of the world? and the plain answer to all such questions is, that God's designs are carried into effect gradually, that at present we see unfinished plans, which discover enough of wisdom and goodness to assure us of their final completion.

5. As God is immutable, he must always continue the same loving and merciful being which the scriptures now reveal; consequently he never can become vindictive, and punish merely to destroy, or to render miserable, the punished.

6. Punishment must either be vindictive or corrective; if the latter it perfectly agrees with the character of God, as a Father, as a being whose nature is love, to inflict it; but if the former, then it implies the existence of some principle in God contrary to love, a principle of vindictiveness, and the infliction of it is inconsistent with his pure goodness, as well as his paternity; nothing is more evident than that vindictiveness and revenge can neither consist with, nor proceed from love.

7. If God be infinitely good, which none will deny, every act of his must be an act of goodness; but it never can be made appear that to punish vindictively is an act of goodness; consequently he cannot inflict vindictive punishment, of course the punishment he inflicts must be corrective, and if corrective it must be limited, it cannot be endless.

8. As God doth not afflict willingly, but calls judgment his strange work, the punishment he inflicts cannot be a final end, but must be subservient to an end worthy of infinite goodness. Many instances are re-

corded in scripture of his punishing with a viewto the moral good of the punished; and as he hath said he will not be always wroth, and speaks of the duration of his wrath but as a moment, in comparison of the continuance of his loving kindness, there seems a moral certainty that future punishment will be limited and corrective; for his nature can never change, nor he ever act contrary to his infinite goodness and mercy.

9. God is the first cause and last end of all things, every thing which takes place is under his government, and shall be subservient to his gracious designs; therefore it is morally certain he will make all things productive of ultimate moral good and happiness to the whole rational creation.

10. The admission that future punishment will be limited and corrective, gives a greater latitude of meaning to many of the promises and declarations of God, and will be found to accord with the natural import of the scriptures. If it be said, on this ground it must be supposed the sacred penmen did not fully comprehend the things revealed to them, this is no more than is admitted to be the fact respecting several passages in the Old Testament, relative to the calling of the Gentiles, &c. which were not fully understood before the appearance of Christ. The reader is left to judge of the weight of these arguments in support of the third hypothesis.

CONCLUDING ADDRESS.

I cannot content myself to lay down my pen without solemnly addressing immoral men and careless professors of the gospel. I would say to all such, "think not that any of the opinions entertained by christians respecting future punishment can leave you any thing to hope, while you go on in your evil practices, and continue to neglect the important duties of christianity: so long as that is the case you have every thing to fear, every thing alarming to apprehend. You are exposing yourselves to the awful displeasure of the Almighty, rendering yourselves unfit for the kingdom of God, and heaping up wrath against the day of wrath. Future condemnation awaits you. You are nourishing, by the guilt you are accumulating, the worm that will prey upon your vitals, and kindling the fire that will consume you. You are preparing pangs and tortures for your own souls. Without repentance and obedience, without that faith which worketh by love, you are lost, you must perish. O think how short your life is! How soon your mortal career may end! You are not sure of a single day. In the state in which you die you must rise from the dead and come to judgment; then you must receive according to the deeds done in the body. Abuse not the goodness and long-suffering of God. Suffer not your own passions, nor the evil example of others, to lead you on to your destruction. Trust not to a mere nominal christianity. Add not to the number of those unhappy persons who have a name to know God and in works deny him, who have the form of godliness, but deny the power of it. Obey the gospel, imitate the example of Jesus, and all will be well, you will be honored and rewarded in his glorious kingdom. If however you refuse to be instructed, if you continue to disobey the

gospel, and go on in the paths of iniquity, nothing remains but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation: the only prospect before you is that of a most awfull punishment, the nature and duration of which are involved in such terrifying obscurity, as should even now make your hearts tremble, and fill your souls with anguish.

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A REPLY

TO

MR. R. WRIGHT'S

"ESSAY ON FUTURE PUNISHMENT," &c.

IN FOUR LETTERS TO THE REV. MR. BENSON.

BY D. ISAAC.

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A REPLY, &c.

LETTER I.

TO THE REV. MR. BENSON.

Dear Sir,

I WROTE my book againſt the Univerſaliſts, in conſequence of Mr. Vidler giving a public challenge to all the Methodiſt Preachers. I heſitated for a long time about engaging in the controverſy, in the hope that ſome preacher, more competent to the taſk, would have taken it up. I have the ſatisfaction, however, of learning, from various quarters, that my labours have been eminently ſucceſsful in putting a ſtop to the ſpread of Univerſaliſm. This I conſider as a ſufficient reward.

Mr. Wright, one of the gentlemen upon whoſe works I animadverted, has lately publiſhed a ſhort "Eſſay on Future Puniſhment," in the preface to which, he aſſigns ſome reaſons for declining the controverſy. Mr. W. and Mr. V. are very intimate friends, and have, therefore, undoubtedly had ſome communication with each other upon the ſubject. It does not appear likely, conſidering theſe circumſtances, that Mr. W. would have told the world my book was unworthy of an anſwer, if Mr. V. intended to give it one. The plain matter of fact ſeems to be this: Mr. V.'s challenge is accepted, and ſomething muſt be done. He could not write again upon the ſubject without giving his opponent a reply. His right-hand man was not bound by a pledge, he therefore comes forward and tells the world, that I *do not deſerve* public notice. You know, Sir, it is

the eaſieſt thing in the world, when a man cannot anſwer an argument, to ſay, it is good for nothing.

But though Mr. W. has not written a formal anſwer to my book, he tells his readers, pref. p. 4, 5, "It is preſumed that the following eſſay, though "not written as a reply to Mr. I. contains more "than an anſwer to what it would be proper to "notice in writing a reply to his book." Moſt of Mr. W.'s friends would have been amply ſatisfied if he had given any thing like a tolerable anſwer.—I believe the moſt ſanguine among them did not look for *more* than that. Now in this *more than an anſwer* to my book, Mr. W. employs *three whole pages and a half*, (24, 25, 26, and part of 27,) in arguing againſt endleſs puniſhment, and *nearly three whole pages* (part of 34, the whole of 35 and 36, and part of 37,) in giving "a ſummary view of the lead-"ing arguments in ſupport of the doctrine of limit-"ed and corrective puniſhment." The reſt of the Eſſay is taken up in proving that ſin will be puniſhed, —that it will be puniſhed in a future ſtate,—and that the ſinner will not, after a period of ſuffering, be annihilated. I have no controverſy with Mr. W. upon theſe ſubjects. It is true that under the firſt chapter he aſſumes that ſinners will be reſtored; and he infers from it they muſt be puniſhed, becauſe he thinks puniſhment neceſſary to work their reformation; but you know, Sir, that *aſſumptions* paſs for nothing in controverſy. *Six pages and a half* then are what I am to conſider, as containing *more than an anſwer* to my book. Do you not think, Sir, that Mr. W. bids fair to become the Don Quixotte of controverſialiſts!

Mr. W.'s reaſons for not writing a reply to my book, are,

1. "Mr. I. has ſtated nothing new, produced "nothing in ſupport of his hypotheſis, nor uſed any "reaſoning againſt limited puniſhment, but what "has before received examination and replication, "*pref.* p. 3, 4." After reading theſe aſſertions,

we muſt not be very extravagant in our expectations from Mr. W., on the ſcore of veracity.

2. "Had Mr. I. written in a different tone, and "ſhewn more of a diſpoſition for the patient inveſ- "tigation of religious truth, it might have been "proper to have replied to his book, though it con- "tained nothing new, pref. p. 4." When the tone which a writer aſſumes clearly indicates an indiſpoſition of mind to yield to the force of truth, it is not worth while, on his own account, to enter into controverſy with him, becauſe there can be very little hope of his converſion; and therefore if the diſpute be private, it may be prudent to decline it. But when the queſtion is before the public, the caſe is altered. A man who writes in a bad ſpirit, may uſe ſtrong arguments, and his arguments may operate upon the minds of his readers, and when that is the caſe, if he propagate error, an anſwer is neceſſary.

The ſpirit in which an author writes has nothing to do with the main point. When I take up a piece of controverſy to read, I do not enquire, Is the man in a good temper, or in a bad one? Is he proud, or is he humble? I aſk, what is truth? If he begin to boaſt or ſcold, inſtead of engaging in cloſe argument, I cry, Stop Sir!—I did not want to know whether you were haughty or angry; but whether you could confute your opponent. If he begin to beg, rather than to fight, I ſay,—Sir, you are very humble, but you are alſo very weak; you ought to know, that Truth does not command the homage and obedience of the world, in anſwer to her prayers, but by the power of her arguments. But when a man wards off a feeble thruſt from a ſwaggering antagoniſt, and immediately brings him down, I allow him to laugh, and I laugh with him: —who could forbear? This caſe applies to the diſpute betwixt me and the Univerſaliſts. Mr. Vidler, as the champion of his party, publicly challenged the

Methodiſts, and becauſe they did not come forward immediately, he boaſted and bluſtered away againſt them wonderfully. I took the field, and encountered ſeveral of them together. I warded off their blows, and brought them to the ground. I could not help ſmiling,—hundreds have ſmiled with me. They have quitted the field, and Mr. Wright is running about with his ſword in his hand, telling his friends and the world, that I have not hurt him, that he could eaſily vanquiſh me;—and yet, that he will have nothing more to do with me, becauſe there is ſomething in my looks which he does not like, &c. Had I engaged in this controverſy for the ſake of victory, could I have deſired one more complete?

Mr. W. complains that I want "a diſpoſition for "the patient inveſtigation of religious truth." If Mr. W. has got the aſſurance to ſay, that he has had the patience to inveſtigate half as many arguments, pro and con, in one publication, as I have done in mine, he is qualified to ſay any thing.

"His manner," ſays Mr. W. p. 4, "is ill ſuited "to the ſolemnity of the ſubject." If my mind had not been deeply impreſſed with the importance and ſolemnity of the ſubject, I ſhould not have taken the trouble to employ my pen upon it; but a man may be allowed ſometimes to be merry even upon a grave ſubject. Suppoſe our country were invaded by a large army. The ſubject is a very ſerious one. But if the enemy appeared upon our ſhores with wooden ſwords, and with muſkets and cannon without any ammunition, might not every Britiſh ſoldier, without exciting any ſuſpicion of his loyalty or patriotiſm, laugh at their impudence and weakneſs? A very ſolemn queſtion was once agitated in Iſrael,—whether Jehovah or Baal ought to be worſhipped. A prophet who had hazarded his life in the ſervice of Jehovah, could not forbear making uſe of a little irony, when he ſaw the ſilly attempts made by the prieſts of Baal to perſuade their idol to work

a miracle, in ſupport of his claims to the adoration of the multitude. Like the ſoldier and the prophet, I feel the ſolemnity of the ſubject; but like them, I am compelled to ſmile at the folly of the adverſary.

The Univerſaliſts have treated their opponents in the moſt indecorus manner. We have been called *ſnarling cynics*, and *flippant fops*; we have been publicly challenged, and for our ſilence have been publicly inſulted; we have been repreſented as *rejoicing* that the puniſhment of the wicked will be endleſs; and "the *leading men* both among Calviniſts and "Arminians," have been repreſented as "doing "*every thing which intereſt, connexion, favour, or* "*frowns can do*, to ſtop the progreſs of the Univer-"ſal Doctrine:" and all this is ſaid, without any proof of the things charged upon us being ſo much as attempted.* Could they expect, Sir, after all this abuſe and ſlander, that, if we ſhould come forward at all, it would be with all the apathy of Stoics? I have ſometimes ſmiled at their folly, and at others I have chaſtiſed them for their unfair dealing; but I am not ſenſible that I have once indulged in either unchriſtian levity, or indignation.

You will find, Sir, I believe, other reaſons in the courſe of theſe letters, than thoſe which Mr. W. has aſſigned, for his declining the controverſy. I do not deſire better evidence of the impreſſion which my book has made upon his mind, than he has furniſhed in this Eſſay. He has abandoned the old ground, taken up a new poſition, propoſes a new plan of operations, and attributes all theſe changes to the power of his opponents. The remaining part of this letter ſhall be taken up in tracing the differences between the preſent and former ſtatements of the queſtion, and in ſhewing to what miſerable expedients the party have recourſe, to ſupport their declining cauſe. The enquiry will afford you a good *deal of amuſement.*

* *See the Pref.* to my Refut. of the Doct. of Univ. Reſtoration.

Mr. W. ſays, p. 32, 33, "It is not now contend-
"ed that the final reſtitution of all mankind is ſo
"clearly revealed in the Scriptures as to be capable
"of being ſupported otherwiſe than by inference
"and deduction; nor that it ought to be main-
"tained as a leading or fundamental doctrine of
"Chriſtanity."

Mr. Wincheſter was of a different opinion upon both theſe points. He conſidered the doctrine as not merely implied, but expreſsly aſſerted in many paſſages of Scripture, and as being of the utmoſt importance. In his reply to Mr. Taylor, he ſays, p. 53, 54, "Let every one conſider, that this is not a "notion or ſpeculation. It is not a hint dropped "by the bye.—It is not a thought collected from a "ſingle paſſage, or a few paſſages of Scripture "merely by *implication*. But it is a glorious and "infinitely important truth: a plain Scripture "doctrine, poſitively and repeatedly aſſerted in "various forms of ſpeech, on the moſt ſolemn oc-"caſions, when every circumſtance required the "moſt clear and expreſſive language. Let no chriſ-"tian therefore dare to reject it, leſt he be found "guilty of making God a liar, in not believing the "record he hath given of his Son." Again, p. 45, 46, "Thoſe who defend the doctrine of the Reſtora-"tion from Scripture, if I may be allowed to ſpeak "for myſelf and brethren, are ſo far from doing it "by laboured *criticiſms* and *deductions*, that they "ſuppoſe they have many *plain Scriptures*, which "*expreſsly relate* to the ſubject, to build upon." And again, p. 43, "I think that the promiſes of the "reconciliation and reſtitution of all things, con-"tained in many texts, are ſome of the *moſt plain*, "*poſitive, and abſolute promiſes*, or prophecies, in all the "Bible." And to crown all, he has told us, p. 41, *that* "No controverſy of equal importance with this "was ever preſented to mankind."

There is a very great difference in theſe two ſtate-ments betwixt Mr. Wincheſter and Mr. Wri-

To what is this owing? Mr. Wright ſhall anſwer: "The objections of our opponents," ſays he, "may lead us to ſtate the ſubject in a more correct "and conſiſtent manner: this is an advantage I "hope we ſhall derive from oppoſition." Thus you ſee, Sir, how we have made them lower their pretenſions. Formerly, no doctrine was more clearly revealed, nor equally important; now, it is not "capable of being ſupported otherwiſe than by in-"ference and deduction, nor ought it to be main-"tained as a fundamental doctrine." We muſt grant that this latter comes much nearer to a "cor-"rect and conſiſtent" ſtatement of the ſubject than the former; and as Mr. W. is kind enough to attribute this "advantage," to the objections of his opponents, we may be allowed to congratulate ourſelves upon the ſucceſs of our labours. This is a very important conceſſion. Every thing which God requires us to believe, he has expreſsly revealed; and therefore, ſince the Reſtoration is deſtitute of this character of authority, no man is bound to believe it; and it is difficult to ſay, how the Univerſaliſts can juſtify their conduct in making ſuch a clamour about it, when they confeſs, that no inſpired writer has ſpoken expreſsly upon it: I hope we ſhall hear no more about the doctrine of the Reſtoration being intended by God Almighty as a centre of union among chriſtians, and as neceſſary to be believed in order to perceive the harmonious diſplay of his perfections; for we may be ſure that the word of God muſt be *expreſs* upon theſe important ſubjects.

It will ſtrike you, Sir, as a very ſingular circumſtance, that Mr. W. would have people to believe his doctrine without putting him to the trouble of proving it. You will be ſurpriſed how a man who is *perpetually* canting about *rationality*, can have the aſſurance to propoſe ſuch a thing. Yet ſo it is. "As all our knowledge," ſays he, p. 23, "reſpect-"ing a future ſtate muſt be derived from divine

" revelation, whatever men aſſert reſpecting future " puniſhment they are bound to prove from the " Scriptures; the work of proving that it will be " endleſs belongs to thoſe who aſſert that tremen- " dous doctrine, not to their opponents to prove a " negative; if they fail in the production of ſuffi- " cient proof, a contrary doctrine muſt follow of " courſe." Mr. W. is ſo pleaſed with this new diſ- covery, and it is of ſo much importance to him in his preſent forlorn condition, that he introduces it a *third* time at p. 33. " As the *onus probandi* lies with " the advocates for endleſs miſery, if they fail to " produce clear and deciſive proof, the advocate " for limited and corrective puniſhment has, in " fact, nothing to prove, the doctrine for which he " contends follows as a neceſſary conſequence."

There ſeems to be a ſtrange contradiction in the above ſtatement. Mr. W. tells us, that " whatever " men aſſert reſpecting future puniſhment they are " bound to prove from the Scriptures." You would naturally ſuppoſe from this, that when Mr. W. aſſerts that future puniſhment will be *limited* and *corrective*, he is obliged to prove his doctrine from the Sacred Oracles. No ſuch thing. If I " fail to produce " clear and deciſive proof of endleſs miſery," he " has, in fact, nothing to prove"—his " doctrine " muſt follow of courſe," and " as a neceſſary con- " ſequence,"—whether the Scriptures ſay any thing or nothing about it.

Mr. Wright ſays, it does not belong to him to prove a negative. Granted; but ſurely Mr. W. does not need to be informed, that it is not a nega- tive, but a poſitive propoſition, to affirm, that future puniſhment will be *limited* and *corrective*. When I aſſert that future puniſhment will be endleſs, he has certainly a right to put his negative upon it, and to demand my proof; but when, on the other hand, *he affirms* that future puniſhment will be limited and corrective, it is my turn to deny and his to prove. Any dabbler in logic knows that this is the

eſtabliſhed order of diſputation; and I believe, Mr. W. is the firſt, *in this enlightened age*, who has endeavoured to ſet it aſide. His cauſe muſt be in a moſt deſperate ſtate, when he is reduced to the expedient of deſiring the world to receive his doctrine, without any proof at all, though he confeſſes in the ſame breath, that "whatever men aſſert reſpecting "future puniſhment, they are bound to prove from "the Scriptures."

You know, my dear Sir, that a man may believe a *truth*, and yet "fail in the production of ſufficient "proof" of it. There are thouſands who believe in the exiſtence of God, and in the authenticity and divine inſpiration of the Scriptures, who do not know how to prove either. Mr. W. will not deny this. But their failing to produce ſufficient proof does not eſtabliſh the truth of either atheiſm or deiſm; it only ſhews the *ignorance* of ſuch believers.

We urge the words *everlaſting*, *for ever*, &c. in proof of endleſs puniſhment. Mr. W. tells us, p. 25, that theſe words "properly mean a hidden "period. And that it beſt agrees with the awful "obſcurity in which the future ſtate of the wicked "is left, to ſuppoſe their puniſhment will be per-"petual during a hidden or undefined period." I will grant this, for the ſake of argument, though I poſitively deny it in fact. Now then, on Mr. W.'s principles, the reaſon why we fail in the proof of endleſs miſery, is, becauſe its *duration* is not revealed in the Scriptures, but is *involved in obſcurity, is hidden and undefined*; but this very reaſon applies with exactly the ſame force againſt his inference, that its duration is limited. When there is no deciſive proof on either ſide of a queſtion, to ſay that the want of proof on one ſide, proves the truth of the other, is one of the greateſt abſurdities which can be uttered. Tom and Harry entered into a diſpute about the age of their deceaſed mother. Tom inſiſted that ſhe was 50, and Harry, that ſhe was only 40. After the moſt diligent ſearch, they could find

no documents to enable them to aſcertain preciſely how old ſhe was. Well then, ſays Harry to Tom, if you cannot prove that ſhe was 50, my aſſertion that ſhe was juſt 40 "muſt follow of courſe!!"—But I wiſh the Univerſaliſts particularly to remark, that if, as Mr. W. ſays, "all our knowledge reſpecting "a future ſtate muſt be derived from Divine Reve-"lation," and if this Revelation has told us nothing about the duration of puniſhment, but has left it *hidden* and *undefined*, then it not only follows, that they cannot infer, that future puniſhment will be limited from a want of proof that it will be endleſs, but alſo, that it is *abſolutely impoſſible* for them to prove its limitation, *in any way whatever*.

Might we not, Sir, inſiſt upon it, that if only one ſide had to perform the taſk of proving, it belonged to our opponents rather than to us. The doctrine of endleſs puniſhment has obtained general belief in the Chriſtian world from the days of Chriſt and the Apoſtles to the preſent time. Origin, it is true, entertained ſome opinions on this ſubject which differed from thoſe of the generality; but he made very few converts, and the modern Univerſaliſts do not pretend to adopt the ſentiment upon his principles. Our opponents then are to be looked upon as a ſort of reformers. Now every man expects a Reformer to ſay to him, "I will prove that you are "wrong, and that I am right." In what a pitiful light would the characters of Luther and the other Reformers have appeared to poſterity, had they ſaid to the Papiſts, "Gentlemen, we do not believe "your doctrines; and if you cannot prove them to "be true, to our ſatisfaction, you ought to adopt, "without examination, as a matter of courſe and as "a neceſſary conſequence, a new ſyſtem, which we "have had the goodneſs to frame ready to your "hands." Inſtead of this, they zealouſly ſet about *expoſing* the errors of popery, and proving and de*fending* the doctrines of the reformation. If Mr. *W.* be either afraid or aſhamed to try to prove his

doctrines, he may be ſilent and welcome; but he ought to excuſe us, if we do not implicitly receive his dogmas.

Mr. Wincheſter believed that the *onus probandi* lay on his ſide the queſtion. In his reply to Mr. Taylor, p. 41, 42, he remarks, "The threatenings "of everlaſting fire, everlaſting deſtruction, eter- "nal damnation, eternal fire, and everlaſting puniſh- "ment, would have ſettled the point," [the belief of endleſs puniſhment] "with me, did I not find "expreſs promiſes in the ſame book" about the reſtoration. After citing ſome texts of Scripture, he proceeds,—"Now were it not for theſe and "many other expreſs promiſes in the New Teſta- "ment—I ſhould never have renounced the tenet "of endleſs damnation." Mr. Wincheſter, you ſee, acknowledged that the proof lay wholly with him, and that if it were not for *expreſs promiſes* in favour of the reſtoration, which we have ſeen Mr. Wright does not pretend to, he confeſſes that the point would be ſettled on the ſide of endleſs puniſh- ment. And even Mr. W. does not deny, that "the "doctrine of endleſs puniſhment ſeems to be ſtated "in ſome paſſages in the New Teſtament." Now when a doctrine *ſeems* to be ſtated in the Scriptures, it ought not to be given up for another of a quite oppoſite nature, without the *cleareſt proof*. To take off the force of the objection, that endleſs puniſh- ment ſeems to be taught in the New Teſtament, he ſays, "So does the doctrine of tranſubſtantia- "tion." If Mr. Wright thinks that the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation even *ſeems* to be taught in the New Teſtament, I have only to ſay, I cannot congratulate him on his diſcernment.

Here, Sir, is another inſtance of Mr. Wright's ſtating the ſubject, in a very different manner from what the great apoſtle of his cauſe has done. Mr. *Wincheſter was* ready to prove every thing; Mr. *Wright is unwilling* to prove any thing. We ad-

mire his greater modeſty. This is another *advantage* which he, no doubt, has derived from the objections of his opponents!

We have ſeen that Mr. W. requires us to "produce clear and deciſive proof;" he aſſigns a reaſon for this, p. 33: "The moſt indubitable proof is "neceſſary to induce a belief of endleſs puniſhment, "becauſe it is a doctrine *ſeemingly* repugnant to rea- "ſon and the known perfections of God." And yet he has not denied, in the ſame page, that "the "doctrine of endleſs puniſhment *ſeems* to be ſtated "in ſome paſſages in the New Teſtament." Now this, Sir, *ſeems* very ſtrange,—that God ſhould *ſeem* to reveal a doctrine to his creatures, which *ſeems* repugnant both to their reaſon, and to his perfections. I cannot ſee that God has ſtamped the ſemblance of error on the face of truth; if Mr. W. can, I do not envy him the diſcovery, nor all the advantages which he can derive from it.

In p. 34, Mr. W. aſſigns his reaſon why "in- "ferences and deductions are deemed a ſufficient "ground for the admiſſion of the final reſtoration." This wonderful reaſon is, becauſe theſe inferences and deductions "flow from what is admitted on "all ſides, reſpecting the divine character and per- "fections." Endleſs puniſhment flows as naturally from theſe admiſſions as the reſtoration. I have ſhewn at large in my book, that the reſtoration cannot be proved from the character of God, and that endleſs puniſhment is perfectly conſiſtent with it. This Mr. W. has not dared to anſwer.

Thus you ſee, Sir, the abſurdities into which Mr. W. has betrayed himſelf, in attempting to ſhew "why inferences and deductions may not be ad- "mitted as a ſufficient ground for the belief of end- "leſs puniſhment, but the moſt direct proof is re- "*quired*, while inferences and deductions are "*deemed* a ſufficient ground for the admiſſion of "*the final* reſtoration." His doctrine ſeems very *agreeable* to the character of God, and my doctrin

ſeems contrary to it!—but to whom? Why to Mr. W. and his friends, to be ſure, for nobody elſe can ſee the matter in this light. Now, Sir, ſuppoſe I were to ſay that the direct contrary ſeems to me to be the truth; do you think that Mr. W. would allow me to ſet inferences and deductions on my ſide of the queſtion, as equal to the moſt direct proof on his!!

It was on account of her *penury* that the widow's mite was ſaid to be *more* than the liberal offerings of the rich,—ſhe gave all that ſhe had. Mr. W. has done the ſame,—he confeſſes that he has nothing better to offer than inferences and deductions. But he carries his money to a different market. She did not offer her mite as the purchaſe of truth. This precious commodity is ſold to the higheſt bidder, and poverty can make no purchaſes. Mr. W. has got ſome *ſhining* money; he ſays it *ſeems* very good, and, mine *ſeems* very indifferent; i. e. his new coin glitters, and my old coin looks dull; and therefore a little of his, he thinks, is equal to a deal of mine. We have an old proverb, that *all is not gold that glitters.* Juſtice takes her ſcales and weighs, finds that the poliſh of a guinea adds nothing to its weight, and diſpoſes of the pearl of great price, to him whoſe money is heavieſt.

Mr. W. would not, ſurely, wiſh people to believe his doctrine on leſs evidence than is neceſſary to induce a belief of the doctrine of his opponents, if he could give them more than his opponents can produce, or even as much. We do not need Argus's eyes to ſee through all this. Mr. W. is the firſt writer I have met with who has propoſed to make inferences and deductions on one ſide of a queſtion equal to "the moſt direct proof" on the other; and there can be but one reaſon aſſigned for this ſingular propoſal,—*the weakneſs of his cauſe.* He may, if he pleaſes, rank this new diſcovery among the *advantages which he has derived from the objections of his opponents!*

Mr. W. is evidently at his wits end. He knows not upon what ground to reſt his cauſe. At one time he ſeems diſpoſed to rely on the perfections of God, and to give up Revelation. "If Mr. I. ſuppoſes that proving that ſome paſſages of Scripture have been miſapplied by Univerſaliſts, is proving the doctrine of endleſs puniſhment, he is greatly miſtaken; the oppoſers of that doctrine found their objections, not ſo much on the interpretation of particular paſſages of Scripture, as on what is admitted by all parties, reſpecting the character, perfections, and deſigns of God." p. 4. I can aſſure Mr. W. that I no more ſuppoſed their perverſions of Scripture proved endleſs puniſhment, than I ſuppoſed they proved ſaint-worſhip; but I confeſs I did ſuppoſe I had proved that their doctrine has no ſupport from the Scriptures, when I had ſhewn the miſapplication of all thoſe paſſages to which they appealed. Mr. W. does not deny that I have proved "that *ſome* paſſages of Scripture have been miſapplied by Univerſaliſts." And when it is conſidered that in his former publications he appeals with much confidence to the Scriptures, and that he now when his eye is upon the proofs which my book affords of himſelf and his party perverting them, turns from the word of God, to the *character*, *perfections*, and *deſigns* of God, the reaſon why he lays ſo little ſtreſs upon the Sacred Oracles is ſufficiently obvious. But by and by, when he has loſt ſight of my book, he veers round again, and ventures all upon Revelation *excluſively*. "As all our knowledge," ſays he, p. 23, "reſpecting a future ſtate muſt be derived "from divine revelation, whatever men aſſert reſpecting future puniſhment, they are bound to "prove from the Scriptures." When a man aſſerts ſuch contradictions as theſe, it is impoſſible we ſhould *know* what he means,—perhaps he does not himſelf.

Thus we ſee, Mr. W. has given up all pretenſion to expreſs Revelation: He wiſhes us to believe *his* doctrine without any proof: If proof be u

quired, he wiſhes us to take a very little on his ſide as equal to a great deal on ours: And he lays the ſtreſs of the argument upon the character, perfections, and deſigns of God, though by his own confeſſion he is bound to the Scriptures. Now, Sir, ſet all this pitiful ſhuffling againſt his profeſſed reaſons for not giving me a reply, and you will not find it difficult to come at the *true* reaſon of his ſilence.

If Mr. W. ſhould venture to take up his pen again in this controverſy, I hope he will derive ſome *advantage* from this letter, and be able to "ſtate the "ſubject in a more correct and conſiſtent manner," than he has done in the Eſſay under review; for he has certainly left himſelf ample room for improvement. At any rate, I truſt my remarks will be of ſome "advantage," in opening the eyes of the public, and afford you ſome little amuſement, which will be a gratification to,

Dear Sir, Your's, &c.

D. L.

LETTER II.

TO THE REV. MR. BENSON.

Dear Sir,

I INTEND, in this letter, to conſider what Mr. Wright has ſaid againſt the doctrine of endleſs puniſhment. He ſays, p. 23, "What has been "urged in ſupport of the doctrine of endleſs miſery "may be brought into a narrow compaſs; it is "*ſummarily* comprehended in the following parti-"culars." The number of particulars is *five*; they are brought into the "narrow compaſs" of half a *page*; and even upon this poor half page, we are not *allowed to ſpeak for ourſelves*, but are made to ſay juſt

what Mr. W. pleaſes. It is quite natural to ſuppoſe, from ſuch conduct as this, that our arguments, like coals of fire, had burnt Mr. W.'s fingers. He is afraid to handle them; he pours water upon them; but ſtill they are too hot for him; ſo after holding them about half a minute, he throws them down, and determines to have nothing more to do with them. Whatever opinion you may entertain of Mr. W.'s honeſty, you will undoubtedly admire his prudence.

Mr. W., you will recollect, has charged me with a want of "diſpoſition for the patient inveſtigation "of religious truth." Compare my book with his half-page-ſtatement of our arguments and with this charge, and you will feel, as I do, a mingled ſenſation of pity and contempt.

I have read many controverſial works where the authors have fabricated arguments for their opponents, and then very gravely refuted them. If I were wicked enough to do it, I could very readily prove any ſyſtem you pleaſe to be erroneous, provided I might be allowed, as a preliminary, to manufacture the arguments upon which it ſhall be founded. But I never could be ſatisfied with this method of managing a controverſy. I have ſaid, Why not ſuffer your opponents to ſpeak out for themſelves? Why not give us chapter and verſe? I have often examined the books confuted in this *ſummary* way, and then the myſtery has been explained! I determined when I entered upon this controverſy to preſent the arguments of the Univerſalifts at length, and in their own words, that the world might have a full view of the ſubject, and be able to determine whether I ſucceeded in refuting them or not; and I am bold to affirm, without any fear of contradiction, that the preſent age has not *produced* a controverſial work of the ſame ſize with *mine*, which contains a larger portion of quotations *from the* works of opponents.

Had I not a right to expect, that when I wrote

anſwer to a public challenge, if the party replied at all, they would do me the juſtice to repreſent my arguments fairly? But Mr. W. comes forward and pretends to compreſs all the proofs of endleſs puniſhment within the narrow compaſs of half a duodecimo page, and to give, not merely an anſwer, but "*more* than an anſwer" to my book, without quoting a ſingle line from it!

"To invalidate the arguments uſed in ſupport "of the doctrine of endleſs torments," Mr. W. gravely informs his readers, p. 23, 24, "*it will be* "*ſaid*, that they are founded on detached and figura- "tive paſſages of ſcripture, which will admit of a "different meaning." I know Mr. W. has *ſaid* ſo ſeveral times, both in this and his former publications. He has, perhaps, forgotten an old Engliſh proverb,—"It is ſooner *ſaid* than *proved*."

You will expect, Sir, as a matter of courſe, that Mr. W. has ſaid ſomething about the words *everlaſting*, *for ever and ever*, &c. He tells us, p. 24, "Thoſe terms are, in the Old Teſtament, applied "to things which have had an end, and, in the New "Teſtament, to things which will have an end." You know I granted that thoſe words are ſometimes applied to things whoſe duration is limited; but I proved that they properly denote endleſs duration, and that they cannot be underſtood with any reſtriction when applied to future puniſhment. Mr. W. has not entered into any diſcuſſion about the proper meaning of the words, abſtracted from their application to any particular ſubject; and therefore what I have ſaid to prove that αιων properly means, *eternity*, and αιωνιος, *eternal*, may now be conſidered as indiſputable. He however informs us, p. 25, "that "the words everlaſting, for ever, &c. as connected "with future puniſhment, properly mean a hidden "*period*;" but he cites no authority, and gives no *reaſon to ſupport* this new meaning.

But though Mr. W. does not examine one of my *arguments, in* this "more than an anſwer" to my

book, he endeavours to ſhew, " That ſome of the " ſtrongeſt paſſages urged in ſupport of the doc- " trine of endleſs puniſhment, do not unequivocally " relate to the puniſhment of men after they are " raiſed from the dead." If Mr. W. has ſucceeded in this attempt, it muſt be confeſſed that he has very conſiderably weakened the evidence in ſupport of endleſs puniſhment; I will therefore lay the whole of what he has ſaid upon this ſubject before you, and leave you to judge, after comparing it with my reply, what danger that doctrine is in from this new mode of attack.

" That Matt. xxv. 31, to 46, relates to the judg- " ment, Chriſt will declare and execute upon the " nations, found on the earth at his coming, and " does not relate to men after they are raiſed from " the dead: that in the whole account no mention " is made of the reſurrection, and that when raiſed " from the dead, men will not exiſt in a national " form, ſo as to need being ſeparated the good from " the bad, but be found in two vaſt bodies, the " righteous and the wicked. p. 24."

Mr. W. aſſigns two reaſons why this text " does " not relate to men after they are raiſed from the " dead." 1. " In the whole account no mention " is made of the reſurrection." No mention is made of the reſurrection in Rom. xiv. 10, 11, 12: 2. Cor. v. 10. Heb. ix. 27. Mr. W. has profeſſed in this Eſſay his belief of a general judgment to take place after the general reſurrection. Now I am ſure he will not deny that the texts juſt quoted refer to the general judgment; becauſe it is impoſſible to prove the doctrine from the Scriptures, if the authority of ſuch paſſages be diſputed. But if theſe texts prove the general judgment, though they are ſilent about the reſurrection, then this ſilence in Matt. xxiv. 31—46, can be no reaſon why it does not refer to that awful day of Chriſt. The reſurrection and the judgment are two diſtinct ſubjects, and therefore there is no neceſſity always to ſpeak

them together. In fact there would be just as much propriety in saying that no text can prove baptism which does not treat of the Lord's-supper, as to say that no text can prove the general judgment which does not mention the resurrection. This reason of Mr. W. is so remarkably weak, that I really am ashamed to dwell upon it.

2. "When raised from the dead, men will not "exist in a national form, so as to need being sepa- "rated the good from the bad, but be found in "two vast bodies, the righteous and the wicked." Their being called *all nations*, does not imply that they will exist in a national form when this judgment takes place, and the connexion is inconsistent with such a notion. "Before him shall be gathered "all nations." They cannot exist in a national form when *gathered before* the throne of Christ.

Mr. W. supposes that, when raised from the dead, men will not need to be *separated* the good from the bad. But how will he prove this? He does not need to be informed, I hope, that the good and bad frequently mingle together in the same grave; and I presume he will not contend that they will be separated prior to the resurrection; I do not see, therefore, how he can avoid the conclusion, that the separation will be subsequent to the resurrection.

Mr. W. has said nothing to prove that the phrase *all nations*, intends "the nations found on the earth "at Christ's coming," exclusively. He might with as much propriety have restricted it to the first age of the world as to the last; for it is just as likely that our Lord meant Adam and Eve only, as that he intended no more than the people of any other particular age. There is no restriction in the passage to any one age, and it must therefore include all nations in all ages.

Mr. W. grants that the passage refers to a judicial transaction—it "relates to the judgment Christ "*will declare* and *execute*." There is not another passage in all the Bible where the proceedings of the

general judgment are so fully detailed as in t
begins with these striking words: " When
" of man shall come in his glory, and *all* tl
" *Angels* with him, *then shall he sit upon the* t
" *of his glory*. And *before him* shall be gath
" *nations*." The awful separation takes pla
righteous are rewarded, and the wicked pu
If this passage, as Mr. W. contends, only rel
the judgment Christ will declare and
" upon the nations, found on the earth at h
" ing," there will be no such thing as a
judgment.

The Judge will say to the righteous, " C
" blessed of my Father, inherit the KINGDO
Mr. W. restricts this kingdom to the virtuou
upon the earth at Christ's coming; but the
promised it to *all* his disciples. " Fear ne
" flock; for it is your Father's good plea
" give you the *kingdom*. Then shall the ri
" shine forth as the sun, in the *kingdom* o
" Father." Luke xii. 32. Matt. xiii. 43. The
threatened the wicked that they should not
the Kingdom of God; but I no where read
threatening the righteous that if they did
till the coming of Christ, they should have
part nor lot in this matter. So far from it,
clares,—" We which are alive and remain u
" coming of the Lord shall not prevent (o
" *fore*) them which are asleep. For the Lo
" self shall descend from heaven with a shou
" the voice of the Archangel, and with the
" of God: And the dead in Christ shall rise
[that is, before the living shall ascend. An
the dead are all risen out of their graves]
" we which are alive and remain shall be ca
" *together with them* in the clouds to meet th
" in the air, 1 Thess. iv. 15, 16, 17." C
thing be more express than this passage
Mr. W.'s scheme? He supposes that at
ing of Christ, the living will be judged

dead will be raiſed, and that Matt. xxv. 31—46, "does not relate to men after they are riſen from "the dead." The Apoſtle contradicts this in the moſt poſitive terms. He aſſures us that the living ſhall not go before the dead to meet the Lord, but that the dead ſhall riſe firſt, and then both ſhall be caught up TOGETHER.

Mr. W. proceeds, p. 24, 25: "That in 2 Theſs. "1. 9, no mention being made in the context of "the wicked dead being raiſed at that time, the "Apoſtle is moſt likely ſpeaking of the wicked "who will be found alive on the earth at the com-"ing of Chriſt." What I have ſaid above is, *properly ſpeaking*, "more than an anſwer" to this new interpretation.

P. 25. "The paſſage in the Apocalypſe, which "ſpeaks of the beaſt and falſe prophet being tor-"mented day and night for ever and ever, fur-"niſhes no proof that the wicked dead when "raiſed will be conſigned to endleſs torments; for "no one will contend that the beaſt and falſe pro-"phet are perſons raiſed from the dead; beſides, the "contents of the Apocalypſe are too ſymbolical for "its peculiar phraſeology to admit of a rigid, literal conſtruction."

You know, Sir, it is very common with the Sacred Writers to repreſent large bodies of men, ſometimes by an animal, ſometimes by a man or woman of a particular character; but the Hieroglyphic is always characteriſtic of the perſons it is intended to deſignate. Thus a beaſt ſpeaking like a dragon, is a fit emblem of perſecutors; a whore, of unfaithfulneſs to God; and a falſe prophet, of deceivers. The puniſhment, therefore, ſaid to be inflicted upon the beaſt, the whore, and the falſe prophet, is deſcriptive of the fate of all bloody bigots, apoſtates, and hypocrites. Thus in Rev. xx. 10, the beaſt is ſaid to be "*tormented* day and night for ever and "*ever*," *but in* Rev. xiv. 9, 10, 11, this is explain-*ed to denote the* puniſhment of the MEN who wor-

ſhip the beaſt. " If *any man* worſhip the bea
" his image, and receive his mark in his fo
" or in his hand, the ſame ſhall drink of the
" the wrath of God, which is poured out
" *mixture* into the cup of his indignation;
" ſhall be tormented with fire and brimſto
" the preſence of the Holy Angels and in t
" ſence of the Lamb: And the ſmoke of th
" ment aſcendeth up *for ever and ever:* An
" have no reſt day nor night." By parity
ſon, when the whore and the falſe prophet a
to be puniſhed *for ever and ever*, the plain mean
that this ſhall be the portion of all backſlide
deceivers.

Having ſhewn that the beaſt and falſe prop
ſignate men, and that their puniſhment is deſc
of the fate of thoſe men, it follows of cour
they will be raiſed from the dead. Mr. W.
" No one will contend that they are perſons
" from the dead." It is true they are n
raiſed from the dead, but I need not prove
that they will be raiſed at a future period, b
he believes in the doctrine of a general reſurr
What can Mr. W. mean by harping upon the
rection perpetually? Does he ſuppoſe t
puniſhment muſt terminate prior to the reſurr
if the reſurrection be not expreſsly mentioned
threatening? Jeſus Chriſt promiſed eternal
his ſheep, John 10, 28. In this text no men
made of the reſurrection; muſt we fron
omiſſion infer, that the righteous will not be r
or that their eternal life will end before they i
their reſurrection bodies? In Mr. W.'s reply
Ryland, p. 9, he quotes John xiv. 19, as aff
incontrovertible proof of endleſs happineſs;
text does not drop a ſingle hint about the re
tion. Now if Mr. W. contends that endleſs
neſs may be promiſed in texts which make
tion of the reſurrection, why does he
omiſſion in other texts as a reaſon why t

threaten endleſs puniſhment?—The queſtion is—*Do the words uſed denote endleſs duration?* Mr. W. might juſt as well have mixed with the diſcuſſion, a diſſertation upon repentance, faith, or—any thing elſe, as his quibbles about the reſurrection.

Mr. W. ſays that "the contents of the Apocalypſe are too ſymbolical for its peculiar phraſeology to admit of a rigid literal conſtruction." The beaſt and the falſe prophet are ſymbolical, but the phraſe, *for ever and ever* is not; and it is upon this phraſe, as connected with the puniſhment of the wicked, that we lay the ſtreſs in this controverſy.

I will now give you Mr. W.'s explanation of Mark ix. 46. He aſſures us that this paſſage "by no "means proves that the wicked will be fuel to the "fire, and a prey to the worms as long as God "exiſts; for as the language is evidently figura-"tive, Chriſt in uſing it might not refer to a future "ſtate, but to the confuſion and miſery which "would be produced among his diſciples, and in "their minds, like a fire among them, and a worm "within them, if they did not practice ſelf-denial, "p. 25." I ſhall not attempt to confute this.—I have introduced it merely to let you ſee to what ſhifts Mr. W. will have recourſe to avoid the force of our arguments. He that can believe it, let him believe it.

Mr. W. is very anxious to get rid "of the caſe "of Judas, and of thoſe who blaſpheme againſt "the Holy Spirit." He ſays, p. 25, "that ſuch very "ſingular caſes ought not to be brought into argu-"ment, in reference to the duration of the puniſh-"ment of all the wicked, as they are manifeſtly "inapplicable." It is true that Judas's crime cannot be repeated, but many a man has harboured *the ſame diſpoſitions* in his heart, and therefore, had *he been in Judas's* circumſtances, would have com-

mitted the ſame ſin. The caſe of Judas, is that of a man betraying a virtuous friend, who had laid him under great obligations, for a trifling ſum of money. This is no ſingular caſe—it occurs every day. When outward circumſtances are favourable, it requires only two diſpoſitions, ingratitude and covetouſneſs, to produce ſuch a caſe as this.—Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt was not the crime of an individual merely, but of multitudes. It is not neceſſary to enquire here, whether this blaſphemy can be committed now or not. If the evidences of Divine Truth are not preſented to the minds of men with the ſame force in every age, and therefore do not meet with the ſame ſort of reſiſtance in all ages, yet it is poſſible for the human heart to be as depraved in one age as in another. Theſe two caſes then may not be quite ſo ſingular as Mr. W. ſuppoſes.

But if it be proved that Judas and the blaſpheming Phariſees will ſuffer for ever, does it follow that *all* the wicked will meet with the ſame fate? Perhaps not: but ſtill "ſuch ſingular caſes *ought* to be brought into argument" againſt the Univerſaliſts, becauſe they deſtroy the vital principles of the reſtoration. Endleſs puniſhment can no longer be ſaid to be diſproportionate to the crimes of this ſhort life, nor to be inconſiſtent with the character, perfections, and deſigns of God: judgment is not a mediatorial work founded upon mercy, nor is hell a purgatory. Beſides, the blaſphemers are ſaid to be in danger of eternal (*αιωνιε*) damnation, Mark iii. 29. Now, if the blaſphemers will literally be puniſhed for ever, the word in this paſſage muſt denote *endleſs duration*; and if it be granted that it properly means *eternal* in one place, where it is applied to future puniſhment, how will the Univerſaliſts ſhew that it *has* not the ſame meaning in all the other places *where* it is applied to the ſame ſubject? Eternal (*αιωνιος*) puniſhment cannot mean both limited and

endleſs puniſhment. The word muſt have the ſame unlimited meaning in Matt. xxv. 41, 46, and other places, that it has in Mark iii. 29. We need not wonder, Sir, that Mr. W. would have theſe ſingular caſes, as he calls them, left out of the controverſy.

What Mr. W. ſays further on the caſe of Judas is borrowed from Mr. Vidler, and anſwered in my book. When old arguments are brought forward again, and no notice is taken of the anſwers, there is no myſtery in the buſineſs, particularly when *more* than a reply is promiſed.

"The account of thoſe who blaſpheme againſt "the Holy Spirit, affords not clear proof that the "Jews who committed that ſin will be tormented to "all eternity; if puniſhed both in this world and "the next, it is all the words clearly expreſs. It "may be ſaid in that caſe, according to the ſcrip- "ture ſenſe of the word forgiveneſs, they have no "forgiveneſs, as they ſuffer the whole puniſhment "threatened, though it ſhould terminate their ex- "iſtence, or mercy ſhould afterwards be ſhewn "them," p. 26.

When Mr. W. ſays, "If puniſhed both in this "world and the next, it is all the words clearly ex- "preſs," I ſuppoſe he alludes to Matt. xii. 32: "Whoſoever ſpeaketh againſt the Holy Ghoſt, it "ſhall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, "neither in the world to come." Though it is not *clearly expreſſed* here that the blaſphemer ſhall be *puniſhed*, yet it is *clearly implied*. By his ſaying that puniſhment is "clearly expreſſed," he undoubtedly ſuppoſes, that a perſon who is not forgiven by the Almighty is ſubject to puniſhment. In this I agree with him. But if puniſhment be neceſſarily aſſociated with not having forgiveneſs, the blaſphemer *muſt ſuffer for ever*; for the words, "Shall not be "*forgiven*, neither in this world, neither in the

"world to come," are equivalent to these: "Shall "not be liberated from punishment, neither in this "world, neither in the world to come."

But, Sir, if punishment *should terminate the existence* of the wicked, as Mr. W. intimates may possibly be the case, though it would be true enough that they would have no forgiveness, yet it is as certain that they cannot be restored. His idea of a future state is as much opposed as mine is to annihilation.

What can Mr. W. mean where he says of sinners, that "they suffer the whole punishment threatened, "though mercy should afterwards be shown them?" It would sound very strange to tell a man, after he had suffered the full penalty of the law for his crimes, that it was an act of mercy to restore him again to society. He would answer, with indignation, "No; "I claim my liberty as an act of justice; you cannot, "without injustice, punish me any longer: I owe "nothing to your mercy."

Mr. W. grants that the blasphemers *will not be forgiven*, and yet he contends that *mercy will be shewn them*. If this be not a contradiction, I confess I do not know what is. Exercising mercy to the offender is the greatest proof that can possibly be given of forgiveness on the part of the offended. And it is not a possible case to say, that God *will shew mercy* to those whom he *will not forgive*. This is self-evident;—it requires no proof.

The words of our Lord are easy to be understood. When a man says of a person who has seriously injured him, that he will *never forgive him*, every body knows his meaning is, at the best, that he will never be reconciled to the offender, nor receive him to favour. Now it is said of the blasphemer *twice*, that he *shall not be forgiven*. It is said further, that *he shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, neither in the world to come*; and that he hath NEVER forgiveness; *but is* in danger of *eternal* damnation, Matt. xii. 31.

32. Mark iii. 29. Luke xii. 10. It is impoſſible to expreſs, in ſtronger terms than theſe, eternal exclusion from the mercy and favour of God. The caſe of theſe blaſphemers then is deciſive againſt the reſtoration, and clearly eſtabliſhes endleſs puniſhment; for if God will never be reconciled to them, nor receive them to favour, they cannot poſſibly be happy; and ſince there is no medium betwixt happineſs and miſery, Mr. W. being equally with myſelf oppoſed to annihilation, they muſt be for ever wretched.

But I might have ſpared both you, Sir, and myſelf all this trouble. Mr. W.'s own ſtatement of the caſe ſerves ſufficiently to confute his hypotheſis. He contends that there will be unpardoned ſinners in heaven!—that God will receive thoſe to favour whom he will never forgive!—What ſort of a ſong will theſe blaſphemers ſing? Not the ſong of David, where he breaks out, "Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul! "and all that is within me bleſs his holy name! "who *forgiveth all thine iniquities*;" for Mr. W. aſſures us that "they have no forgiveneſs." Not the exalted ſtrains of the bleſſed, as recorded, Rev. v. 9. "*They* ſung a new ſong, ſaying, Thou art worthy; "for thou waſt ſlain, and haſt redeemed us to God "by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, "and people, and nation;"—for they will not be redeemed out of any kindred, tongue, people, or nation upon earth; but, if we believe Mr. W. out of hell. Not the ſong of John and his companions in Rev. i. 5. They ſing—"Unto him that loved us, "and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood;" but theſe blaſphemers, according to Mr. W. will not be waſhed from ſin in the blood of Chriſt, but will be purified from it by fire and brimſtone. Not the ſong of "*Salvation* to our God which ſitteth "upon the throne, and unto the Lamb," ſung by "*the* great multitude whom no man could number;"

(Rev. vii. 9, 10.); for Mr. W. in his reply to Dr. Ryland, diſtinguiſhes between reſtoration and ſalvation, and informs us that the *reſtored* are not included in the number of the *ſaved*. What ſubject, then, can inſpire their tongues with praiſe? Not pardon; for "they have no forgiveneſs." Not mercy; for "they ſuffer the whole puniſhment threatened." Not the cleanſing efficacy of a Saviour's blood; for their puniſhment corrects their moral pravity. And if we exclude from their ſong the pardon of ſin, the mercy of God, and the blood of Chriſt, I am afraid their note will be turned to lamentation, and mourning, and woe!

There is another ſubject which Mr. Wright diſpatches in a very *ſummary* way that deſerves particular attention: He ſays, p. 26, 27, "In reply to "the aſſertion, that the moral ſtate of ſinners will "be unchangeable after the preſent life, it will be "ſaid, that no ſuch thing is expreſſed in the Scrip-"tures." He then proceeds to affirm, that "it is a "mere unfounded aſſertion, and can be of no weight "in argument." Is Mr. W. ignorant that Mr. Fuller brings forward a great number of texts of Scripture to prove that no change for the better will take place in the moral ſtate of ſinners after the preſent life? Is he ignorant alſo that I have done the ſame? But he might perhaps think it a ſafer way to tell the world there is no evidence, than to examine what is produced. Out of a multitude of paſſages which might be ſelected, I will, for the preſent, venture the cauſe upon three.—"He that is unjuſt, let him "be unjuſt ſtill; and he which is filthy, let him be "filthy ſtill.—It is impoſſible to renew them again "unto repentance.—Ye are the ſalt of the earth; "but if the ſalt have loſt his ſavour, wherewith "ſhall it be ſalted? it is thenceforth good for no-"*thing* but to be caſt out, and to be trodden under "*foot* of men." Rev. xxii. 11. Heb. vi. 4—6. Matt. v. 13. When Mr. W. has proved, contrary

to the words of our Lord, that the unjuſt *ſhall not* remain unjuſt ſtill, nor the filthy remain filthy ſtill; when he hath ſhewn how it is *poſſible* to work a moral change in thoſe, whoſe repentance an apoſtle declares to be *impoſſible*; and when he has anſwered our Lord's queſtion, how ſalt which hath loſt its virtue can recover its ſeaſoning power? though the Saviour expreſsly declares "it is good for nothing:" When, I ſay, Mr. W. has performed theſe wonders, we will then allow him to ſay, "that no ſuch thing "is expreſſed in the Scriptures" as the impoſſibility of a change in "the moral ſtate of ſinners after the "preſent life." Till then, I hope, the above may be conſidered as ſomething more than "unfounded "aſſertion," and be allowed to have *ſome* "weight in "argument."

You will perhaps be ſurpriſed, Sir, if any thing which Mr. W. ſays can ſurpriſe you, that this gentleman, after having exhauſted his own artillery, ſhould have recourſe to the deſtructioniſts; yet ſo it is. "The advocates," ſays he, p. 27, "for the "future total deſtruction of the wicked will ſay, "that to deſcribe the puniſhment which in Scrip-"ture is called deſtruction, death, the ſecond death, "&c. as an endleſs life in torments, is manifeſtly "abſurd." I know they will affirm that it is abſurd: But why? Becauſe, they ſay, theſe phraſes prove annihilation. Does Mr. W. believe them? If not, why does he wiſh us to believe them? If he does, what becomes of the reſtoration?

"It will be farther argued, that, as particular "paſſages of Scripture, eſpecially ſuch as are capa-"ble of being variouſly explained, ought to be con-"ſtrued in ſuch a ſenſe as beſt agrees with the re-"vealed character and perfections of God, and the "plain declarations of his mercy, it is impoſſible "the doctrine of eternal torments ſhould be taught "in the paſſages quoted to ſupport it; becauſe it "cannot be reconciled with the revealed character

"of God, nor with many plain and positive decla-
"rations of his Word," p. 27.

I am quite at a loss to know what plain and positive declarations of the word of God Mr. W. has an eye to. You know, Sir, he has granted that there is nothing *express* in the Scriptures in favour of his system; and it seems to be a necessary consequence that they contain nothing *plain* and *positive* against mine. It is denied that the passages urged in support of endless punishment "are capable of being va-
"riously explained;" Mr. W.'s new explications have been fully refuted; and he has not informed us what part of the "revealed character of God" opposes the doctrine for which I contend; no further answer, therefore, is necessary.

I have now, Sir, gone through Mr. W.'s arguments against endless punishment. You will, I dare say, think I have been sufficiently tedious; but you know I stand accused of a want of "a disposition
"for the patient investigation of religious truth." Accept this as my apology, and believe me to be,

Dear Sir, Your's, &c.

D. I.

LETTER III.

TO THE REV. MR. BENSON.

Dear Sir,

THIS letter shall contain an examination of Mr Wright's "Summary View of the Leading Argu-
"ments in Support of the Doctrine of Limited and
"Corrective Punishment.

"1. Endless punishment must either be unjust,
"or it must cease to be any punishment at all; for
"as there is no proportion between the present short

" life and eternity, there can be no proportion be-
" tween an eternity of misery and the sins of this
" short life; yet punishment to be just must be pro-
" portioned to the crimes punished; but if the pu-
" nishment be proportioned to the sins of the pre-
" sent life, which the sacred Scriptures plainly
" teach will be the case, and the infliction of it be
" endlessly extended, it must be divided into such
" an infinity of parts, that the part inflicted in any
" given period will be as nothing, consequently it
" will cease to deserve the name of punishment,"
p. 24, 25.

Mr. W. has undertaken to prove one of these two things:—" Endless punishment must either be un-
" just, or it must cease to be any punishment at all."
I will consider each separately. 1. Is endless punishment unjust? " Punishment to be just must be
" proportioned to the crimes punished." Granted.
" There can be no proportion between an eternity
" of misery and the sins of this short life." Not between the *time* of sinning and the *time* of suffering; but there may be the justest proportion between the *degree* of sin and the *degree* of suffering. Mr. W. applies the rule of proportion to *time*, I apply it to *degree*: he has said nothing to establish his own sentiment, or to disprove mine.—One man can dispatch his neighbour in a moment, another cannot do it in less than an hour. If the punishment be proportioned to the time of sinning, the latter will receive just 3600 times as much as the former. The principle of Mr. W.'s argument is this: he that can do most mischief in the least time will have the least to suffer;—the most accomplished villain will be best off. We should think an earthly judge insane who should make either the duration or the degree of punishment to depend upon the time of sinning. He considers the *number*, the *nature*, and the *magnitude of sins*, and punishes accordingly: The time taken up in committing them is never once taken into

to the account. I think Mr. W. will not
again to attack the juſtice of endleſs puni
upon this ground. I will now enquire wheth

2. "Endleſs puniſhment muſt ceaſe to
"puniſhment at all." You will naturally f
Sir, that a propoſition which involves in itſelf
tradiction, as this does, muſt have ſome diff
in its demonſtration. None at all,—at leaſt to
"If the puniſhment be proportioned to the
"the preſent life, which the ſacred Scriptures
"teach will be the caſe, and the infliction
"endleſsly extended, it muſt be divided in
"an infinity of parts, that the part inflicted
"given period will be nothing, conſequently
"ceaſe to deſerve the name of puniſhment."

You will obſerve, Sir, that this argument
upon the former. The proportion for whi
W. contends is betwixt the *time* of ſinning
time of ſuffering. Grant him this, (though
ſhewn it to be an error,) and it will follow
ſinner deſerves to be puniſhed for only a
period. But when he talks about this limi
niſhment being *endleſsly extended*, he talks n
A woman might as well pretend to ſpin a th
infinite length from a pound of tow. He div
finite puniſhment into an infinite number of
includes each within a given period, calls
nothing, and then concludes the whole to
thing. But this ſpoils all.—It is like the wom
when ſhe finds ſhe cannot make the thre
enough, tries to break it into an infinite nu
pieces, and propoſes to include each within
diſtance; but when her thread is broken t
and reduced to nothing, can it be ſaid to
nitely extended? Thus Mr. W., by trying t
limited puniſhment, confeſſes that it breaks
infinite number of parts; and when he come
for theſe parts, he cannot find them—it
that they are reduced to nothing; but

punishment be reduced to nothing by an attempt to extend it *endlessly*, is not this a demonstration that it (*limited* punishment) cannot be endlessly extended?

Mr. W. divides his *finite* into parts till he has reduced them to nothing, and calls them an *infinite* number of parts. But this is absurd. Any thing which will divide into an *infinite* number of parts must be *infinitely* divisible; and that which is *infinitely* divisible cannot by division be reduced to nothing; for when any thing by division is reduced to nothing, it cannot be divided again—there is an end of it; but that which is *infinitely* divisible may be divided again and again without end—there will always be something remaining—*Nothing* cannot be a part of *any thing*. We might as well call *nothing* a *whole*, as a *part*; but it is neither, for talk as long as you please, nothing is nothing, and all that Mr. W. has said comes to *nothing!*

It is, I believe, an indisputable axiom, that the *parts* of any thing are equal to the whole of that of which they are the parts. "It is certain," says Dr. Keill, "Whatever number of parts it" (any given magnitude) "has, whether finite or infinite, "they are equal to their whole; for as ten tenth "parts of an unit make an unit, a hundred hun- "dredth parts of an unit taken together do like- "wise compose an unit, and a thousand thousandth "parts collected in one sum cannot be greater than "the whole; so likewise the infinite infinitesimal "parts of any magnitude are equal to that magni- "tude." If, therefore, Mr. W.'s parts of punishment are nothing, the whole, before its division into parts, is nothing.

Mr. W.'s argument will serve equally well to demonstrate, that endless happiness, as the reward *of the virtue* of the saints, is nothing. Thus: "If "*the*" happiness "be proportioned to the" virtues "*of the* present life, which the Sacred Scripture

" plainly teach will be the caſe, and the" beſtow ing " of it be endleſsly extended, it muſt be divided " into ſuch an infinity of parts, that the part" be ſtowed " in any given period will be as nothing, " conſequently it will ceaſe to deſerve the name " of" happineſs. Q. E. D.

I ſhould not have taken ſo much pains with this ſilly argument, but it is *new*, and is undoubtedly thought to be a wonderful diſcovery, as it is put at the head of Mr. W.'s *leading* arguments. But, my dear Sir, if he ſeriouſly thinks that he has demonſtrated endleſs puniſhment to be no puniſhment at all", " why doth he yet find fault" with us, under the pretence that we repreſent God Almighty as puniſhing ſin too ſeverely? Surely no puniſhment at all cannot be too much! Does Mr. W. ſuppoſe that limited puniſhment is any real puniſhment? If ſo, he is involved in the abſurdity of making it more than endleſs puniſhme t; if not, then they are both alike, *nothing;* and all his pains to eſtabliſh the one and to diſprove the other, is, to ſay the leaſt of it, only making " much ado about nothing."

" 2. The Scriptures plainly teach that there " will be degrees of puniſhment in a future ſtate; " that every one will receive according to his deeds; " that ſome will be beaten with many ſtripes; " ſome with few ſtripes; not the terms light and " heavy, but many and few, are uſed, which, how- " ever figurative the language, convey the idea " that the duration of ſuffering will not be the " ſame to all who are puniſhed; but if all be pu- " niſhed with endleſs miſery,—all degrees in pu- " niſhment will be deſtroyed," p. 85.

Here Mr. W. appeals to the Scriptures, and cites two paſſages to prove that the difference in the puniſhment of ſin will be in duration. "That every one will receive according to his deeds," we believe as firmly as Mr. W. can do. He thinks, however,

that "if all be punished with endless misery, all "degrees in punishment will be destroyed." This silly assertion has been often refuted, and yet it is brought forward again with as much confidence as if it were indisputable. Now, Sir, what a curious proposition is this: There can be no difference in the degree of punishment which offenders suffer, if the duration of their punishment be equal. Suppose two men to be punished for one hour; one is nailed to a cross, and the other is put into the stocks; is there no difference in the degree of their punishment? Can a maniac utter a greater absurdity than to say, that there is no difference in punishments except in their duration? A cannon-ball can take off a leg in as little time as a fly can bite; but there is a vast of difference between the loss of a leg and the bite of a fly. And if there may be a difference in the degrees of punishment, the duration of which is equal, then sinners may receive a degree of punishment proportioned to their crimes, though the duration of punishment be endless. Mr. W. will not deny that there will be a difference in the happiness of the righteous, proportioned to the difference in their virtue, and that the duration of the happiness of the virtuous will be endless; and there is no more difficulty in reconciling different degrees of misery, than different degrees of happiness, with endless duration.

Mr. W.'s comment upon Luke xii. 47, 48, is the most singular I have ever met with. It is really a curiosity in sacred literature, and ought to be preserved, that generations to come may see how far blind zeal for a favourite system carried a man in the *nineteenth century*. "Not the terms light "and heavy," says Mr. W., "but many and few, are used, which, however figurative the language, convey the idea that the duration of suffering will *not be the same* to all who are punished." When you have read this, I am afraid you will be very

much at a loſs to determine, whether Richard Wright or Richard Brothers ought to ſtand firſt as interpreters of Sacred Scripture. Mr. W. grants that the text is figurative. The words, few and many, are *comparative*, and therefore ſerve juſt as well as the terms light and heavy could do, to denote leſſer and greater *degrees* of puniſhment. But I will not take up any more of your time in expoſing this miſerable quibble.

" 3. As God is infinitely good, it is unreaſonable " to ſuppoſe he would have brought into being ra- " tional creatures, when he knew they would, after " a few years feveriſh exiſtence, become complete- " ly miſerable, and eternally remain ſo:——It is " impoſſible that a Being who is infinitely good " ſhould totally abandon his rational offspring, " much more keep them alive in torments as long " as He himſelf exiſts," p. 35.

I grant it is both unreaſonable and impoſſible that God ſhould inflict endleſs puniſhment upon merely *rational* creatures; and Mr. W. has conſidered men in no other light in this paragraph. He knows, I dare ſay, for what reaſon he was ſilent about their guilt and depravity. If God has nothing againſt them except their being " rational " creatures," or " his rational offspring," I ſhould think it both unreaſonable and impoſſible, that he ſhould puniſh them even with " a few years feveriſh " exiſtence" in this world, much more that he ſhould puniſh them in the world to come. Mr. W. does not ſuppoſe, I hope, that men will be puniſhed becauſe they happen to be *rational*; but if this ſhould be the caſe, he need not be under any very ſerious alarm—I dare ſay he will come off as well as moſt of his neighbours. Do thoſe deſerve to be called *rational creatures*, who trample under *foot* the laws of God, deſpiſe his authority, defy *his* power and juſtice, reject his mercy in Chriſt *Jeſus*, and blaſpheme his Holy Spirit? Our Lord *inſtead of* calling ſuch profligate hardened ſinners

God's *rational offspring*, tells them—"Ye are of "your father, the devil."

But can the endleſs puniſhment of *ſinners* be reconciled with the Goodneſs of God? It muſt never be forgotten that God is a moral governor. He has given us laws for the direction of our conduct, becauſe our good is inſeparably connected with moral order. Obedience to his laws cannot be ſecured without penal ſanctions; it follows, that the threatenings of the law ſpring from his goodneſs. All this Mr. W. will grant. The great queſtion then is, *How powerful muſt the threatening be to preſerve ſome tolerable degree of order?* Some have ſuppoſed, (Mr. W., however, is not of the number), that the threatening of endleſs puniſhment is neceſſary to the preſervation of order, but that its infliction ſeems to be contrary to the goodneſs of God. This is oppoſing his love to his ſovereignty. He cannot as a governor threaten to do what it would be inconſiſtent with his nature to execute. Muſt, or can, the puniſhment be of ſuch a nature as to prove both corrective to the ſufferer and exemplary to the world? But this involves in it the conſideration of ſeveral other queſtions.

1. What is the ſtate of the world? The moſt unbounded depravity and licentiouſneſs prevail in thoſe heathen countries where the doctrine of endleſs puniſhment is not believed; and even in Chriſtian countries, where the doctrine is generally believed, not more than a very moderate degree of order is preſerved. As far, therefore, as fact can go to ſettle this point, it confirms the expediency of threatening endleſs puniſhment.

2. Is every ſinner improvable? This is matter of pure revelation, and is ſettled in theſe words: "It "is impoſſible—to renew them again unto repent-"ance."

3. *Is the* moral government of God ſo conſti*tuted, that* puniſhment never fails to correct the

ſufferer? Come, and ſee. "Many vices," ſays Mr. "W., p. 8, "involve men in outward troubles, "debilitate both body and mind, ſhorten life, and "while it continues, produce miſeries which are "at length terminated in a premature grave. Evil "paſſions, ungoverned appetites, and irregular de-"ſires, never fail to torment the breaſt that har-"bours and indulges them." Thus, according to the divine conſtitution, *there is no peace to the wicked.* Now every man who is at all acquainted with the world, knows that, in thouſands of inſtances, the puniſhments of the preſent life produce no change for the better in the minds of the ſufferers. Does the puniſhment of death produce a moral change? Mr. W. ſhall anſwer this queſtion. Page 15, "The mere circumſtances of dying and being "raiſed to life, can make no change in their moral "ſtate; they muſt riſe as ſinful, as guilty, as "much expoſed to the bitter fruits of ſin, as they "died: unleſs the laws eſtabliſhed in the moral "world were diſſolved, and the nature of things "totally changed, this muſt unavoidably be the "caſe." Here, Sir, you have a warm advocate for corrective puniſhment, aſſerting that the moſt dreadful puniſhment which can be inflicted upon ſinners in this world, "*can make no change* in their "moral ſtate." I preſume Mr. W. does not think that the puniſhments of the preſent life are inconſiſtent with the love of God, though he grants that in many caſes they are not corrective; how then will he prove, that the love of God requires correction to be a neceſſary concomitant of puniſhment in the life to come?

4. What does Revelation ſay about the nature and duration of future puniſhment? The ſacred oracles repreſent it as *exemplary* and *eternal.* "So-"*dom* and Gomarrha, and the cities about them, "*giving* themſelves over to fornication, and going "*after* ſtrange fleſh, are ſet forth for an example, "*ſuffering* the vengeance of *eternal* fire," Jude 7

After what I have ſaid in my book, and in my laſt letter, about the meaning of the word αιωνιος, I think I am fully warranted in aſſuming, that, in its application to future puniſhment, it cannot denote leſs than endleſs duration.

From this enquiry it appears that facts, the ſtate of ſinners' minds, the conſtitution of God's moral government, and Divine Revelation, all ſtand oppoſed to Mr. W.'s ſentiment, and ſupport mine. The threatening of endleſs puniſhment, then, is neceſſary to the preſervation of order; order is neceſſary to the good of God's creatures; the threatening, therefore, muſt ſpring from the goodneſs, or love of God.

The good of ſociety requires that murder ſhould be puniſhed with death, and therefore this penalty is uſually annexed to that crime. But if the law which makes murder death to the criminal be a good law, the execution of it cannot poſſibly be an argument againſt the goodneſs of the legiſlator. The law by which a murderer is cut off, was originally framed as much with a view to his benefit as to that of any other individual. While he continued obedient, he had the ſame proof of the love of his ſovereign which his fellow-ſubjects had: his awful end does not argue any change in the affection of his ſovereign; it is owing ſolely to a change in his own conduct. And if it be no argument againſt the goodneſs of an earthly ſovereign, that ſome wicked men are cut off for ever from civil ſociety, then neither is it any argument againſt the goodneſs of God, that ſome ſinners are cut off for ever from the ſociety of Heaven.

Mr. W. will not diſpute the goodneſs of God towards thoſe who arrive at glory: nor will he diſpute that thoſe who are adjudged to hell had the *ſame means* and promiſes of ſalvation with thoſe that *go to heaven*. There is no difference in religious *privileges*, and therefore no partiality in the Divine

affection. God loved the one as well as the other, and provided a Saviour and the means of happineſs equally for both. To the one it is confeſſed he is good; to the other his goodneſs is doubted. Why? Becauſe, though he deſired their happineſs, and would have made them happy, they reſiſted his gracious deſigns concerning them!! To urge the rejection of mercy as an argument againſt its exiſtence, is the extreme of folly.

Mr. W. remarks, p. 12, "We are not reduced to "the ſad dilemma of ſaying, God muſt ſacrifice "the good of individuals to ſecure the general "good of his creatures, for a Being of infinite "wiſdom and power can never be at a loſs to "combine both objects." It is a fact that he does not combine both objects, and therefore it is not worth while to enquire whether he can do it or not. Many thouſands of the Iſraelites, when in the wilderneſs, were puniſhed with death for their vices. Mr. W. has aſſured us, p. 15, that "dying "can make no change in their moral ſtate." In all inſtances of this kind, then, the two objects not only *are not*, but, if we believe Mr. W., *cannot be* combined. The Apoſtle is ſilent about correction, and repreſents their puniſhment as examplary: "Now all theſe things happened unto them for "*enſamples:* and they are written for *our admonition*, "upon whom the ends of the world are come," 1 Cor. x. 11. Caſes occur every day, of men ſuffering for their vices without being reformed. We may ſuppoſe many good things which God could have done that he has not done. He could have made monkies men, and men archangels; he could have prevented the entrance of ſin into the world, and he could immediately deſtroy it: at leaſt, ſo the matter appears to ſhort-ſighted mortals. *But you know, Sir, that our buſineſs is not ſo much with what God can do, as what he has done, does, and will do.* I have ſhewn that he does not always connect correction with puniſhment; Mr. W.'s

therefore, by affirming the contrary, "reduced to "the ſad dilemma" of contradicting the plaineſt facts in the world.

"4. God created all things for his own glory, "being infinitely good, he could not make any ra- "tional creature without intending his happineſs, "and he can neither want will nor power to carry "his intention into effect in due time; but the "endleſs torments of ſinners can no more gratify "God than anſwer the benevolent end of their "creation. If it be aſked, if ſuch be God's in- "tention, why are not all made happy now? It is "anſwered, it might with equal propriety be aſked, "why did not God fill the earth at once? Why is "not man born in the full maturity of his powers? "Why was not Chriſt raiſed up and ſent in the "firſt age of the world? And the plain anſwer to "all ſuch queſtions is, that God's deſigns are car- "ried into effect gradually, that at preſent we ſee "unfiniſhed plans, which diſcover enough of wiſ- "dom and goodneſs to aſſure us of their final "completion," p. 35, 36.

I grant that many of God's plans are carried into effect gradually; but we muſt *know that he has formed a particular plan*, before we have a right to ſay, that he will carry it into effect. How does Mr. W. know that God has formed a plan to fill the earth? Does he learn it from what he ſees in the world, or from what he reads in the word? Before Eve was created, Adam had no evidence that God had formed ſuch a plan, and therefore he could not know that God intended to fill the earth. Mr. W. aſks, "Why is not man born in the full maturity of his powers?" The firſt man was; and it is impoſſible that he ſhould form any notion of the gradual plan which was afterwards purſued, till either God or time had explained it to him. Mr. W. aſks again, "Why was not Chriſt raiſed up "and ſent in the firſt age of the world?" I beg leave to aſk, Could any man have known that God

had a Son? or that he intended to ſend him into the world at all, if his advent had not been the ſubject of propheſy and promiſe? Before, then, we aſſume that God will reſtore all fallen creatures, we muſt know that he has formed a plan to that effect. Mr. W. ſays, "God's plans are carried "into effect gradually." It will follow, of courſe, that if God has formed a plan to bring all men to holineſs, all men are gradually approximating to the goſpel ſtandard of moral excellence; but when we look around us in the world, inſtead of ſeeing all men gradually improving in virtue, we ſee the greater part of them quite deſtitute of it, and making a gradual and an awful progreſs in vice. Another part of this plan, according to Mr. W., is corrective puniſhment. But it has been ſhewn that puniſhment is often inflicted without producing any moral change. The two prominent features, therefore, of a plan to reſtore all mankind to virtue and happineſs, have no exiſtence but in Mr. W.'s imagination—they are both oppoſed to plain matter of fact.

But if this plan to reſtore all lapſed intelligences cannot be inferred from what we ſee in the world, Mr. W. thinks it is clearly deducible from the perfections of God. This brings us to the former part of the argument. "God," ſays he, "created all things for his own glory; being infi- "nitely good, he could not make any rational "creature without intending his happineſs; and "he can neither want will nor power to carry that "intention into effect in due time." If you have attended to this controverſy, you will underſtand at once the reaſon why Mr. W. adds the words "in due time." He had ſaid, in a former publi- cation, that "God cannot act toward any creature, "*at any time*, but from a principle of love"—"that "*he will* never ceaſe to deſire their" (his crea- "tures) "happineſs"—and that, "if what is in- "tended by God, what his ſoul deſireth, ſhould

"never take place, would it not prove either a de-
"ficiency in his wiſdom or in his power?" * To this I replied in my book, p. 33, "The above rea-
"ſoning will apply againſt the introduction of
"miſery with exactly the ſame force as againſt
"its endleſs continuance. For if God never can
"act towards *any creature*, at *any time*, but from a
"prineiple of love; if this be accompanied with
"deſires for their happineſs, and if his wiſdom and
"his power are engaged to fulfil his deſires, then
"it muſt neceſſarily follow, that it is impoſſible
"for *any creature*, at *any time*, to be unhappy. As
"this concluſion cannot be admitted, the premiſes
"muſt be given up." I defy any man to overturn this reaſoning. Mr. W. has now foiſted in the words, *in due time*. He ſays, "God can nei-
"ther want will nor power to carry that inten-
"tion" (the intention to make all creatures happy)
"into effect in due time." This *due time* is ſome diſtant time; Mr. W. has not told us how far diſtant; ſuppoſe we ſay ten thouſand years, more or leſs. Will God have either more love to will, ro more power to effect, the happineſs of his creatures ten thouſand years hence, than he has at preſent? If not, how can his love and power engage him *then* any more than *now* to deſtroy ſin and miſery? If it be ſaid, becauſe at that time ſinners will have ſuffered the whole demerit of ſin, the anſwer is, that the queſtion is changed—it is not love and power, but *juſtice*, which puts a period to ſuffering when the full penalty has been inflicted. The plain ſimple queſtion is this, Is the exiſtence of ſin and miſery inconſiſtent with the perfections of God? If ſo, they could never have exiſted for a moment; if not, they may exiſt for ever. I wiſh the Univerſaliſts would keep cloſe to this queſtion, and they would then ſoon be convinced that their doc-

* *Hints on the Reſtoration*, p. 4, 5.

trine cannot be proved from the Divine Perfections.

I do not deny, however, that God loves his creatures, and has made ſufficient proviſion for their happineſs; but I do not ſuppoſe that every thing relating to his creatures is cauſed by the perfections of God, for then none of them could ever have ſinned, ſince God cannot be the cauſe of ſin. Mr. W. has ſaid nothing about moral liberty, though I have ſhewn in my book that it is only upon this principle that we can rationally account for the introduction of ſin and miſery; and it ſerves very well to reconcile their endleſs continuance with the perfections of God. It is a fact, that his love does not hinder him from making creatures free; and therefore his love cannot require him to deſtroy their liberty; for it would be the ſame as ſaying that God is obliged to deſtroy the work of his own hands. All the plans of Divine Love for the happineſs of free, intelligent creatures muſt have reſpect to their liberty; and if, through an abuſe of that principle, the gracious deſigns of Heaven are fruſtrated, the blame attaches to the creature, and not to the Creator. To ſay a man is not good, becauſe his bounty is ſometimes beſtowed upon objects that only abuſe it, is to put their vices to his account, which is perfectly inconſiſtent with all our ideas of both juſtice and goodneſs.

"5. As God is immutable, he muſt always continue the ſame loving and merciful being which "the Scriptures now reveal; conſequently, he ne- "ver can become vindictive, and puniſh merely "to deſtroy, or render miſerable, the puniſhed." p. 86.

The immutability of the Divine Character makes againſt Mr. W.'s ſcheme. I have ſhewn that God *often* puniſhes ſinners in this world without reforming them; his mercy and love, therefore, ſo far as they are connected with puniſhment, muſt have ſome other end in view than the reformation

the ſufferers: and ſince the character of God is immutable, it ſeems moſt probable that ſinners will be puniſhed for the ſame reaſon, and with a view to the ſame end, in the next world as in this: and ſhould this be the caſe, what becomes of the Reſtoration? I do not know how it may appear to you, Sir, but to me it ſeems quite unaccountable, that Mr. W. ſhould urge the *unchangeableneſs* of God as a reaſon why he ſhould *change* both his meaſures and his end. We do not pretend that God puniſhes merely to deſtroy:—we have ſaid often enough, that puniſhment is neceſſary to preſerve moral order, and this is what our opponents do not deny.

"6. Puniſhment muſt either be vindictive or "corrective; if the latter, it perfectly agrees with "the character of God, as a Father, as a being "whoſe nature is love, to inflict it; but if the "former, then it implies the exiſtence of ſome "principle in God contrary to love, a principle of "vindictiveneſs, and the infliction of it is incon-"ſiſtent with his pure goodneſs, as well as his pa-"ternity; nothing is more evident than that vin-"dictiveneſs and revenge can neither conſiſt with, "nor proceed from love," p. 36.

I dare ſay, Sir, Mr. W. thinks we are faſt enough now. But has he forgot, what I know he dare not deny, that puniſhment is *examplary*. See 1 Cor. x. 6, 11. Jude 7. It is not true then, that "puniſh-"ment *muſt* be either vindictive or corrective;" and, therefore, all that Mr. W. has ſaid upon this ſuppoſition falls to the ground at once. Exemplary puniſhment is ſo far from proving the exiſtence of a principle in God contrary to love, that it is love to the creation, as I have ſhewn in the courſe of this letter, which prompts him to inflict it; and Mr. W. *knows* that a man may ſuffer as an example *to others*, without being corrected himſelf.

"7. *If God* be infinitely good, which none will "deny, *every act* of his muſt be an act of good-

" neſs; but it never can be made appear, that to " puniſh vindictively is an act of goodneſs; conſe- " quently he cannot inflict vindictive puniſhment, " of courſe the puniſhment he inflicts muſt be cor- " rective; and if corrective, it muſt be limited, it " cannot be endleſs," p. 36.

I am no advocate for vindictive puniſhment. Mr. W. here, as in the former paragraph, takes it for granted that there is no medium between vindictive and corrective puniſhment. He is an advocate, however, when it ſuits his purpoſe, for *examplary puniſhment*; and he is at no loſs to reconcile it with the goodneſs of God. I will give you his account of the matter, as an anſwer to the above. " From the conſideration," ſays he, p. 12, " that God cannot fail to ſeek the general good of " the moral ſyſtem, it follows, that it is impoſſible " he ſhould fail to puniſh wilful ſinners; ſeeing the " good of the moral ſyſtem requires that vice " ſhould be rendered odious and abhorrent to the " feelings of rational creatures, by having the " moſt painful effects connected with it, and by " its being marked with the higheſt diſpleaſure of " the ſupreme governor." Now if " the *general* " good of the moral ſyſtem" requires, that particular offenders ſhould ſuffer " the *moſt painful* ef- " fects," and " the *higheſt diſpleaſure*" of God, then Mr. W. has furniſhed us with a principle of puniſhment which is neither vindictive nor corrective, and which perfectly reconciles eternal torments with Divine love.

" 8. As God doth not afflict willingly, but calls " judgment his ſtrange work, the puniſhment he " inflicts cannot be a final end, but muſt be ſubſer- " vient to an end worthy of infinite goodneſs." *This is* exactly the caſe with examplary puniſhment, *it propoſes* " an end worthy of infinite goodneſs," *namely*, the good of the univerſe.

" Many inſtances are recorded in Scripture of his " puniſhing with a view to the moral good of th

" puniſhed; and as he hath ſaid he will not be al-
" ways wroth, and ſpeaks of the duration of his
" wrath but as a moment, in compariſon of the
" continuance of his loving kindneſs, there ſeems a
" moral certainty that future puniſhment will be
" limited and corrective; for his nature can never
" change, nor he ever act contrary to his infinite
" goodneſs and mercy," p. 36, 37.

That there are ſome "inſtances recorded in the " Scripture of God puniſhing with a view to " the moral good of the puniſhed," I am willing to allow; but I have ſhewn that there are many inſtances to the contrary. Two texts are referred to, for proof "that future puniſhment will be limited " and corrective." The firſt is Iſa. lvii. 16, "I " will not contend for ever, neither will I be always " wroth,"—with whom? You have the anſwer to this queſtion in the preceding verſe:—" Him " that is of a contrite and humble ſpirit." Mr. W. does not ſurely ſuppoſe, that this paſſage refers to a ſinner humbled in hell. In the former part of the chapter, the Prophet addreſſes himſelf to the wicked who ſee the righteous periſh without laying it to heart; who worſhip idols under every green tree; who ſlay the children in the vallies under the clifts of the rocks; and who truſt in kings and armies for protection. Their fate is deſcribed, verſe 13,— " When thou crieſt, let thy companies deliver " thee: but the wind ſhall carry them away; vanity " ſhall take them." It is immediately added,— " BUT he that putteth his truſt in me, ſhall poſſeſs " the land, and ſhall inherit my holy mountain; " and ſhall ſay, Caſt ye up, caſt ye up, prepare the " way, take up the ſtumbling block out of the way " of my people. For thus ſaith the high and lofty " One that inhabiteth eternity, whoſe name is Holy, " *I dwell in* the high and holy place; with him alſo " *that is of* a contrite and humble ſpirit, to revive

" the ſpirit of the humble, and to revive the heart " of the contrite ones. For I will not contend for " ever, neither will I be always wroth, &c." The ſcene of this prophecy cannot be laid in hell, becauſe there the righteous cannot periſh, children cannot be offered in ſacrifice to idols, nor can many other things take place which are mentioned in the paſſage. The plain ſenſe of the paſſage is, that it contains a threatening of puniſhment to the wicked, and a promiſe of pardon to the penitent. But what has this to do with limited and corrective puniſhment in a future ſtate!!!

The other paſſage is Iſa. liv. 7, 8, 9. The whole chapter contains a prediction of the calling of the Gentiles under the goſpel. It begins thus: "Sing, " O barren, thou that didſt not bear; break forth " into ſinging, and cry aloud, thou that didſt not " travail with child: for more are the children of " the deſolate, than the children of the married " wife, ſaith the Lord." This addreſs is ſuitable to none but the Gentiles. They are repreſented under the image of a woman barren and deſolate; for they were excluded from that covenant of peculiarity which God entered into with the Jews. They are diſtinguiſhed from "the married woman," who undoubtedly deſignates the Jewiſh nation. Their return to God under the goſpel is finely expreſſed in the following lines of Lowth's tranſlation:

For as a woman forſaken, and deeply afflicted, hath Jehovah recalled thee;
And as a wife, wedded in youth, but afterwards rejected, ſaith thy God.
In a little anger have I forſaken thee;
But with great mercies will I receive thee again:
In a ſhort wrath I hid my face for a moment from thee;
But with everlaſting kindneſs will I have mercy on thee;
Saith thy Redeemer, Jehovah.

This ſort of imagery is familiar to every one converſant with the ſacred writings, and there is no difficulty about its meaning. Our Lord and the

 apoſtle

apoſtle Paul both apply this prophecy to goſpel times, (compare ver. 1 and 13, with Gal. iv. 27, and John vi. 45,) when we know the Gentiles were recalled and received to favour again, after they had remained for ſo long a period, like a divorced woman, barren and deſolate. The paſſage ſpeaks of ſuffering; and I have no objection to the ſufferings of the Gentiles being called *puniſhment* for their idolatry and immorality; but there is no mention made of their being improved by it; and I believe no one who has read the apoſtle Paul's deſcription of them, (ſee Rom. ch. i. and ii.) will ſuppoſe that they were recalled under the goſpel, becauſe they had profited by their afflictions: we cannot well conceive of a greater exceſs of depravity, than that which reigned in the heathen world in the days of the Apoſtle. This paſſage then, which was brought to prove that future puniſhment will be both limited and corrective, has not the leaſt alluſion to either *corrective* puniſhment, or a *future ſtate!!*

If any further proof were neceſſary, that the woman addreſſed in this chapter cannot deſignate the inhabitants of hell, it may be collected from the laſt verſe:

"Whatever weapon is formed againſt thee, it ſhall not proſper;
And againſt every tongue that contendeth with thee, thou
ſhalt obtain thy cauſe.
This is the heritage of Jehovah's ſervants,
And their juſtification from me, ſaith Jehovah." *Lowth.*

If the juſtified perſons be the inhabitants of hell in a ſtate of reſtoration, there cannot be found a being to form a weapon againſt them, or a tongue to contend with them.

Mr. W. does not refer us to another text of Scripture. If he has indeed, according to his promiſe, "ſtated the ſubject in a more correct and conſiſtent "manner," than heretofore, you may now judge, *Sir*, *pretty* correctly, what ſupport his cauſe can derive.

derive from the Sacred Oracles. If theſe be his beſt ſ[illegible]ptural arguments, it was wiſdom in him not to expoſe any more of them.

" 9. God is the firſt cauſe and laſt end of all " things; every thing which takes place is under his " government, and ſhall be ſubſervient to his gra- " cious deſigns; therefore it is morally certain he " will make all things productive of ultimate moral " good and happineſs to the whole rational crea- " tion." p. 37.

In what ſenſe does Mr. W. underſtand the phraſe *all things?* One would ſuppoſe from the connexion, that it meant "every thing which takes " place under the government of God." If ſo, it includes *ſin;* and then it is not true that God is the firſt cauſe of all things, for he cannot be the cauſe of ſin; nor is it true that "he will make all things pro- " ductive of moral good and happineſs to the whole " rational creation;" for to talk about people being made good and happy by ſin, is like ſaying that the way to become clean is to wallow in the mire. If ſin be left out of the paragraph, the paragraph cannot favour the reſtoration. I wiſh Mr. W. and his friends would conſider the import of ſuch paſſages as theſe: " We be ſlanderouſly reported, and ſome " affirm that we ſay, Let us do evil that good may " come:—whoſe damnation is juſt. Shall we con- " tinue in ſin that grace may abound? God for- " bid!" Rom. iii. 8.—vi. 1, 2.

" The admiſſion that future puniſhment will be " limited and corrective, gives a greater latitude of " meaning to many of the promiſes and declarations " of God, and will be found to accord with the " natural import of the Scriptures." p. 37.

When Mr. W. has produced a ſingle promiſe or declaration of God, which requires a greater latitude of meaning than is conſiſtent with the doctrine of *endleſs* puniſhment, it will be time enough to ſay more upon this ſubject. I have

I have now, Sir, given you *all* Mr. W.'s "leading "arguments in ſupport of the doctrine of limited "and corrective puniſhment," and *all the words* which he employs in ſtating, proving, and defending them, except a *few lines* againſt annihilation, and a part of the laſt paragraph which has nothing to do with the controverſy. Mr. W. has told us, preface, p. 5, "The arguments in favour of limited puniſh-"ment are far from being exhauſted." If the *leading arguments* which I have been reviewing, are the beſt he could ſelect out of his ſtore, it was undoubtedly very prudent of him to keep the reſt out of ſight. I remain,

Dear Sir, your's, &c.

D. I.

LETTER IV.

TO THE REV. MR. BENSON.

DEAR SIR,

WE may now conſider this controverſy as brought to a cloſe. You will by this time, I believe, be very well ſatisfied, that what Mr. Wright has the aſſurance to call *more than an anſwer* to my book, is, in reality, no anſwer at all:—It is a feeble ineffectual effort to ſupport an expiring cauſe. You know I came forward in anſwer to a public and an inſulting challenge. The Univerſaliſts themſelves dragged me into this diſpute. They, of courſe, were bound by every principle of honour and religion to give me either a direct and particular anſwer, or to preſerve the ſilence of conſcious inability. To pretend, under ſuch circumſtances, to give more than an anſwer to a work without quoting *a line from it*, is a ſort of management which

no man can have recourſe to, whoſe cauſe is not deſperate, and whoſe honeſty is not doubtful Mr. W. is at perfect liberty if he pleaſes, and if he thinks it will ſatisfy his party, to write fifty more ſuch eſſays, and he ſhall receive no reply from me, if he will only ſhew ſo much regard to juſtice as to decline calling them anſwers to my book.

There is one thing, Sir, which gives me peculiar ſatisfaction, and that is, the little ſupport which even Mr. W. pretends now to derive to his cauſe from the Scriptures. He has given up expreſs Revelation, and has adverted, as we have ſeen, to only three or four texts; and the miſapplication of theſe has been ſo clearly pointed out, that I do not think he will have the confidence to bring them forward again. It may be ſaid, to be ſure, that as Mr. W. was only giving a *ſummary* of the arguments in favour of limited and corrective puniſhment, he undoubtedly omitted many texts which refer to the ſubject; but then it muſt be recollected that the arguments employed are called *leading arguments;* of courſe thoſe texts are choſen which are ſuppoſed to give moſt ſupport to his ſyſtem; and ſince they are proved to be quite irrelevant, he had nothing to hope, nor we to fear, from the reſt. This will ſettle the point with all thoſe who make it a rule to receive all their religious opinions from the ſacred fountain of religious truth.

After all that Mr. W. has ſaid about the perfections of God, and we have ſeen that his arguments are derived principally from this ſource, the duration of future puniſhment is a queſtion of pure Revelation. We are not qualified of ourſelves to judge how much puniſhment is due to ſin, *becauſe we are ſinners.* If criminals were made judges in their own cauſe, would any of them be puniſhed at all? And yet all impartial perſons believe they deſerve *it.* Beſides, we cannot calculate the effects of ſin, *nor* comprehend the extent of the moral govern-

ment

ment of God, the relations which ſubſiſt betwixt the different parts of it, and the various ends which may be anſwered by the puniſhment of offenders; and without a knowledge of theſe things, it is folly and arrogance in the extreme to queſtion the juſtice of eternal puniſhment. Mr. W. has confeſſed, that, "As all our knowledge reſpecting a future "ſtate muſt be derived from divine revelation, "whatever men aſſert reſpecting future puniſh-"ment they are bound to prove from the Scrip-"tures." Here I join iſſue with him, and I hope he will keep cloſe to this point. *To the law and the teſtimony.*

The pernicious influence of Mr. W.'s ſyſtem upon the minds of the immoral, is a conſideration of awful import. Nothing I think can be clearer than that the principles of the reſtoration deprive the threatenings of all their force. In Mr. W.'s reply to Dr. Ryland he has excluded terror from the government of God, and has reduced the threatenings to nihility by aſſerting, that men are not to be brought to love and obey God by having their minds inſpired with tormenting fear, but by ſeeing his lovelineſs and perceiving his love to them. Whether what I ſaid upon that ſubject made any impreſſion upon Mr. W., he has not told us; but at the concluſion of this Eſſay he has changed his tone, and has laboured hard to terrify the wicked. To attempt this, however, upon reſtoration principles, is very inconſiſtent, as I ſhall demonſtrate preſently.

Mr. W. ſays, p. 38, "I cannot content myſelf "to lay down my pen without ſolemnly addreſſing "immoral men and careleſs profeſſors of the Goſ-"pel." If this addreſs had not been called *ſolemn*, I ſhould have thought it *ironical*. You ſhall have a few ſpecimens of it:

"*Think not* that any of the opinions entertained "*by Chriſtians* reſpecting future puniſhment can "leave

" leave you any thing to hope, while you go on in " your evil practices, and continue to neglect the " important duties of Chriſtianity." Now I inſiſt upon it, that Mr. W.'s opinion leaves a man the hope, while he goes on in ſin, that he ſhall be finally happy. He cannot have the happineſs itſelf while he lives in ſin, but he may have the *hope* of it. The ſaints cannot be received into heaven while they continue in the body, but it would be truly ridiculous to ſay that no ſaint, while in the body, can enjoy the *hope* of heaven. In fact it is only while people go on in ſin that it is poſſible for them to exerciſe hope about this reſtoration, for when they become holy, they are not liable to be ſent to hell, and therefore cannot hope to be delivered out of it.

" So long as that is the caſe " (i. e. ſo long as men live in ſin) " you have every thing to fear, " every thing alarming to apprehend." I affirm they have nothing to fear, if Mr. W.'s ſyſtem be true. 1. What is the principle which induces the Almighty to inflict puniſhment? Mr. W. anſwers, *Love to the ſinner.* This principle cannot inſpire fear, for no man can be frightened at the thought that God loves him: the thought is cheering. 2. What is the object of future puniſhment? According to Mr. W. *The good and happineſs of the ſinner.* This cannot beget fear; for no one can dread happineſs: on the other hand it is very deſirable. But it may be ſaid, that though neither the principle nor object of puniſhment is frightful, yet the quantum of it may be very alarming. A Phyſician loves his patient, and propoſes to reſtore him to health and happineſs; but a painful operation may be neceſſary, and this may be terrifying. In reply, it may be ſaid, that if the analogy betwixt bodily and mental diſeaſes would hold, the doctrine of the Reſtoration would be overturned, for ſome bodily *diſeaſes* are incurable. Let us then enquire,

3. What

hat is the quantum of future puniſhment; will recollect, Sir, that Mr. W. has ſaid, only ages back, that "puniſhment muſt either be dictive, or corrective." Now if a third reaſon be thought of, it is not true that puniſhment *be* inflicted for one of theſe two. I have ı that puniſhment is examplary, and he has lf-admitted it in other parts of his Eſſay; is excluded in the leading arguments in ſup- ıf his doctrine. The admiſſion of examplary ıment deſtroys *four*, out of the *ten*, of his ıg arguments. (See 5, 6, 7, and 8, as quoted preceding letter.) If, therefore, a wicked man e the doctrine of Reſtoration upon the credit eſe arguments, he cannot believe examplary ıment; and ſince Mr. W. aſſures us that God ver can become vindictive," it follows, that the ɔbject of future puniſhment is correction:—of e, when the correction is effected, the puniſh- will ceaſe. The queſtion then is, How puniſhment is neceſſary to the correction of nner? The anſwer is, Juſt as much as the pleaſes. The reaſon is this: Virtue cannot torted—it muſt be voluntary:—It is not the of neceſſity, but of choice:—It depends upon *ill*. If this be denied, the abſurdity will fol- that it is a virtue in flame to aſcend, and in to deſcend, becauſe they obey the law of na- But if virtue depend upon the will, if it be ıtary and the effect of choice, the ſubjects ɔle of it *muſt have moral liberty*. Since, there- the inhabitants of hell are ſuppoſed by Mr. W. capable of virtue, they muſt have moral y, and if ſo, they poſſeſs the power to become ɔus at any time; and ſince puniſhment is to ınate when virtue commences, the quantum ıniſhment which they receive, depends ſolely *their own* will. Now nothing can be more *ſterous* than an attempt to terrify people with the

the fear of a puniſhment which they can put an end to as ſoon as they chooſe.

Suppoſe Mr. W. ſhould contend, however, that puniſhment is examplary as well as corrective, I would wiſh to know whether the puniſhment will be continued, for the ſake of example, after the ſinner becomes virtuous? If not, my preceding remarks retain all their force; and if it will, I aſk, To whom? There are only two ſuppoſeable caſes:—Either to the inhabitants of heaven, or to other beings created to probation. 1. Will the puniſhment of the ſinners of this world be neceſſary to operate as a warning upon the inhabitants of heaven? If examples of puniſhment be neceſſary to prevent a ſecond apoſtaſy in heaven, this reaſon applies equally at all times through all endleſs duration, the puniſhment, therefore, muſt be endleſs. 2. Will the puniſhment of the ſinners of this world be neceſſary to warn other beings created to probation? If it be ſuppoſed that God will, in a ſingle inſtance, create intelligent beings after the day of judgment, it may with equal propriety be ſuppoſed that he will repeat the act, at different periods, thro' eternity, and, therefore, this reaſon of examplary puniſhment will make it neceſſary to be eternal. Thus we ſee, that any reaſon which may be aſſigned for continuing puniſhment after reformation is effected, is dangerous to the whole ſyſtem; ſo ſingular a ſentiment, therefore, it is probable, will not be adopted.

I grant there would be ſomething terrifying even in limited puniſhment, if the duration of it were independent of the will of the ſufferer; but a wicked man who embraces the doctrine of Reſtoration can ſcarcely forbear thinking the matter over in his mind thus: "Suppoſe I go to hell, *how* long will the puniſhment continue? The *object* of my puniſhment will be my reformation *and* therefore when that is effected, my puniſ-

me-

will end. Every argument drawn from the and mercy, and goodneſs of God, againſt ıſting miſery, proves that no more puniſhment ɔe inflicted than what is abſolutely neceſſary. [can repent whenever I pleaſe, conſequently ever I pleaſe I can terminate my ſufferings." poſſible, after this, that he ſhould have any l about going to hell!!

You are nouriſhing, by the guilt you are accu-ılating, the worm that will prey upon your :als, and kindling the fire that will conſume u." Does Mr. W. ſuppoſe that a ſoul can be red to health and ſoundneſs by a worm *preying its* VITALS! and that a fire can both *conſume refine* it!!!

Without repentance and obedience, without at faith which worketh by love, you are loſt, ıu muſt periſh." Can a man periſh under that ſhment which renders him imperiſhable!

Suffer not your own paſſions, nor the evil ex-nple of others, to lead you on to your deſtruc-on." If they ſhould refuſe to take Mr. W.'s ce, and, therefore, be deſtroyed, they cannot bly be reſtored, for *deſtruction* and *reſtoration* wo perfect oppoſites.

If however you refuſe to be inſtructed, if you ɔntinue to diſobey the Goſpel and go on in the ıths of iniquity, nothing remains but a fearful ɔoking for of judgment, and fiery indignation: ıe only proſpect before you is that of a moſt wful puniſhment, the nature and duration of /hich are involved in ſuch terrifying obſcurity, s ſhould even now make your hearts tremble, nd fill your ſouls with anguiſh." If *nothing re-ns* to the impenitent "but a fearful looking for ıdgment and fiery indignation," then *there remains ope of the* reſtoration. And if the duration as *as the nature of a moſt awful* puniſhment be hid *rifying obſcurity*, why did not Mr. W. leave it there

there? What presumption is it in him to pretend to demonstrate, that the duration of punishment must be limited, when he tells us, that God has involved its duration in terrifying obscurity!!

What a pity Mr. W. did not furnish his readers with an Universalist Vocabulary, containing his new sense of the terms *nothing*, *any thing*, *vitals*, *consume*, *perish*, *destruction*, &c. for without such a help, it will be impossible for many people to reconcile his concluding address with his doctrine of Restoration. Most immoral men, who believe his doctrine, will find it difficult to refrain from laughing at his exhortation. I am almost afraid I have exhausted your patience: I therefore hasten to subscribe myself,

Dear Sir,

Your's, &c.

D. ISAAC.

THE END.

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